

FEBRUARY, 1914

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The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



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Written by

Joseph Conrad

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

Manuscripts, to receive prompt attention, should be addressed, "Editor of SMART SET."

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THE SMART SET

The Magazine For Minds That Are Not Primitive

KITTENGER'S UNVICTORIOUS VICTORY

By John Walsh

KITTENGER is back in Butte, Montana, taking dictation for the manager of the K. & O. road. He looks older.

Kittenger came to Manila in 1898, the year everybody else came—everybody, that is, except those who came before and afterward. He came as yeoman to Captain Burns of the little United States cruiser *Satterlee*.

Kittenger could take one hundred and fifty words a minute when not seasick, and he was a perfect adding machine. This latter accomplishment was more important twenty years ago than it is now, for adding machines were not then perfected, and yet every once in a while you wanted to add two to three. Kittenger never made a mistake, not in addition I mean, though I scorn to estimate how many columns he footed for the road. But his exploits and triumphs at adding for the K. & O. ended long ago: before he entered the naval service. He is not so fast now.

Kittenger was tall and cadaverous; he wore a flaming red beard, and his features were pinched and insignificant except his eyes, which were bright—and, yes, there was a certain charm about his eyes, a charm felt only by men. Women had no use for Kittenger. Once in

Butte a very agreeable but outspoken female told him frankly she had as soon marry a headache—that was by way of answer to a proposal of marriage. After mature reflection upon this repulse he got himself transferred to the road's New York office to see how metropolitan women felt about things. In general they concurred with the lady from Butte. Some told him so brutally, others gently. With these latter he argued.

Yes, there was something simple about Kittenger, for he actually attempted to win women to marry him by argument. "Perhaps they know nothing of my skill in shorthand and figures," thought he with a sort of twisted vanity, as though these were irresistible charms. So, although by nature modest, he triumphantly vindicated his accomplishments on these points by taking down half-hysterical rebuffs, protests and refusals, rendering them with inimitable accuracy in each case, and by finally totaling foot-long, six-figure columns of pounds, shillings and pence.

There was something simple about Kittenger, for he did not know that women even on the verge of free suffrage like still, as it were, to be dragged home by the hair of the head—that is, after

they have selected the dragger, put their "rat" in the bureau drawer and "done" their hair suitably. In other words, he did not know that they prefer to be chastely abducted.

Kittenger entered the naval service in 1897. Whether this was in token of abandonment of hopes of marriage or whether in donning uniform he felt he was firing a last broadside into the recalcitrant hulk of the female sex, I cannot guess. The next year he came to Manila on the *Satterlee* and he was seasick all the way out.

On the *Satterlee* he went through the stirring scenes of Manila Bay. Indeed, the captain kept him on the bridge as an official observer and recorder, and he and a stop watch and pencil made the most perfect record of the battle of Manila Bay in existence. He could have told you at any instant how many shots each gun in the fleet had fired as well as the intervals between shots, while to an unobservant mind all guns seemed firing at once—but he was used to taking the dictation of volcanic Kearson of the K. & O., who stammered and hiccupped and even then talked a hundred and fifty words per minute, net. Kearson's unsteadiness in speech, I may remark, was ascribed to liquor, but his remarkable steadiness of mind, which was quite as indubitable a characteristic, was not, for reasons which I fail to understand, attributed to the same cause. Kearson was puzzling. He seemed to illustrate the futility of sobriety by continuing for years to keep his health and his job. But that was in Butte. In Manila it is different. There you lose your job when a new President comes and you never can tell about your health until you see.

Kittenger was among the first people to go ashore in Cavite. He was sent to tally the dead while the navy doctors looked at the living.

It was early morning. There were a few dead bodies lying in the narrow streets; hospitals were improvised in churches; official residences were abandoned and more or less perfectly looted; people kept indoors.

Kittenger was dressed in immaculate

double-breasted white, five shining brass buttons on each side. His red beard was spread out fanwise on his thin chest and his carriage was so erect that it leaned backward. Filipinos furtively eyed him from a distance. They were afraid of him; for, to say truth, they more suspected that Americans would prove cannibals than that they might prove liberators. And, in fact, Kittenger did not look like a liberator, and he was none, and neither was he a poet. He passed under the great dap-dap trees and did not see them; he scarcely even saw the statue of El Cano, who came home to Spain from Magellan's so memorable voyage in command of the great dead man's ships. He, however, measured the width of the narrow slab which composes the door of the Comandancia, he paced the width of the stone casemate in three places, and he counted the unburied dead as per orders. And upon all these points he made notes.

But still Kittenger was human. Little children shouted at him and, astonishing thing, a woman smiled at him invitingly. It was a new experience to him. It was sunlight in a dark cell; it was food in a famine. He was embarrassed and flushed, but he stopped and looked at her and murmured unintelligible things in his own language and raised his cap.

The woman was very young, and pretty in a way, the Malay way; she had a certain shy grace, yet she was complacent and unembarrassed. Her eyes were lustrous and beautiful and soft—and, crowning charm, the creature smiled at Kittenger invitingly. She sat at the door of a stone house with an overhanging second story, sat on her heels in a narrow and filthy street filled with strange odors, her bare feet sheathed in wooden soled *chinelas*. She was dressed as Philippine women are, a stiff *pañuelo* of diaphanous stuff at her neck, a bodice which you scarcely notice, and gay-colored stuff swathed gracefully about her thighs and draped downward: it was all becoming and outlandish—and, beyond all, she smiled at him; the ineffable glory of it!

Kittenger left her. He felt very important. He was of a conquering race

in two ways. But he would deal beneficently. Why not teach some individual of these people shorthand—a woman say, a woman like that one back yonder? Better yet, why not teach her everything: his language, manners, shorthand, addition—everything? He seemed to be divinely altruistic, but he was really only divinely egotistical. Who shall segregate our motives for us?

Kittenger went aboard ship glowing with victory—all kinds of victory—and turned over to the captain, as per orders, the tally of the unburied dead, fifty-nine of them; and no trace of the horrors of death showed through his dim, insignificant features. Back at home people had just read Dewey's first cable of victory; it was glorious—and a woman had smiled at Kittenger: how much more glorious that was! And Dewey had not mentioned this latter news.

Kittenger spent that day and the night in an emotional fever. His feelings were white hot; beauty called to him; he saw a little the luminous radiance of moonlight; he was widely and profoundly astonished—a woman had smiled upon him: the mystery and glory of it! He could not recover.

Next day he once more came ashore. He saw the great dap-dap tree and the factitiously heroic figure of the little Spaniard who had circumnavigated the world. Now he appreciated them; he would never forget them.

The native girl again sat languidly by her own door. It was as though she were waiting for him and had been waiting for a long time. She was sitting on her heels smoking. He tried to talk to her, tried to divine the meanings of her unutterably foreign words, and succeeded a little. He thought she was beautiful. Her red young lips enticed him, her thin, graceful arms and rounded breasts made him tremble. It was wonderful, it was romance—it was more than romance: it was life. He wanted to tell her about the perfection of the K. & O. road and one hundred and fifty words per minute, the skill it took. And when he failed he still thought there was nothing between them but the thin barrier of a foreign language. Well, he

would teach her English. Why not? Yes, he would teach her English—and everything else, absolutely everything. It would be beneficent, worthy of a conquering race: he would teach her stenography, sure he would. He went back to the ship glowing with victory, even as people in Chicago and Syracuse were glowing, and with a thousand times their warmth; for a woman had smiled at him, and only the shadow of Dewey's victory had fallen on them.

It was a short courtship. Next night she fell into his arms and he kissed her yielding lips until he felt weak. He had not fancied there was such passion within him, and neither had the ladies in Butte.

On another night a few days later Kittenger was married to Narcissa by the chaplain of the *Olympia* in that large upstairs room on Calle Arsenal later occupied by the celebrated Exiles' Club. The chaplain stood with his plump back to a hole torn in the wall by an eight-inch shell, and on the wall to one side there was a spatter of human blood—someone had got in the way of a splinter torn loose by the shell. But joy was nevertheless unconfined, and it swamped the big room as it has since so often done at meetings of the Exiles' Club. It was not highly refined joy but it was violent, and at the last Kittenger and his bride escaped somewhat bruised and disheveled from a bombardment of his shipmates' shoes; and after he left in a rickety *calesa* the rice lay inches deep on the pavement, so thick that many prudent Cavite housewives uninstructed in the modern theories of sanitation swept rice for family use from the streets.

Kittenger and Narcissa were not left long in a state of undisturbed nuptial bliss, for the little cruiser *Satterlee* was ordered north to Yokohama, and Kittenger, like the typewriter and the main engine and other important machinery, had to go, too. But before he left he got started what he called his home. It was a little nipa and suale shack in San Roque: it sat on stilts and its roof looked like a Shetland pony's mane. Kittenger made what he called improve-

ments to it. He painted it up like a courtesan with stolen government paint. And then he fell in love with the place. When he spoke of it or looked at the shack his red whiskers stiffened with pride until they were bristles.

But Kittenger's pride in his "home" was weak alongside his pleasure in Narcissa. With vast enthusiasm he would grasp her round the waist, her chin on his shoulder, and swing her feet off the floor, then round and round until her *chinelas* fell off. She on such occasions would giggle, struggle loose and gather up the *chinelas* and pretend to work at something. Presently Kittenger would sneak up behind her and repeat the transaction. He never got tired of it. One day she told him she was with child. He slapped his knee and shouted joyfully, "That is grand!" And he was sure it was grand.

Kittenger's married life was so characteristic a sailor's married life that it ceased to be characteristic and became a caricature. He seldom got home. Sometimes he was north, sometimes he was south. For months and months the *Satterlee* would patrol the coasts of Mindanao as a fire belching argument to Moros to accept the beneficent rule of the United States, and then she would dash north, take supplies and coal and dash south again. Finally she was ordered home to New York on five days' notice. Kittenger desired to remain behind near Manila, and at his own request he was ordered to the flagship of the station as flag yeoman. But the fleet policy suddenly changed a few days after he reported aboard, and the flagship, which had been so long moored in Manila Bay, went north to make long cruises and stays in Chinese and Japanese waters. Kittenger was outraged, but he was part of the machinery. Manproposes, the Navy Department disposes. Twice a year thereafter perhaps Kittenger got to Cavite for a few days.

Kittenger was more than in love with a woman—he was in love with an ideal; he not only desired to be a lover—he desired to be a husband and father a family. And as the years went by, Narcissa bore children—seven in all.

Two of them died. That was the year of the cholera. Kittenger was north in Shanghai. Narcissa bore the loss with placid equanimity. Kittenger was wildly troubled. His answer to the news was to send Narcissa money; native to different tongues, bred to different thoughts, that was the only answer he could make. That time he sent her all the money he had—but he did that every payday. And beyond that Kittenger just worked.

Kittenger's office on the flagship was a model of method and order; his files were perfectly kept; he assiduously practised his shorthand, which was becoming rusty with disuse. When he stopped work he was troubled. He would sit at his desk looking blankly out the port, his hands strumming nervously. Nothing that he saw in the north penetrated to his consciousness. He never saw the squalor of China's millions on millions, never felt the charm of Japan, never wondered about Siberia. But he thought constantly of the Philippines, saw the great dap-dap trees in Cavite and Narcissa as he had first seen her, sitting on her heels smoking a *cigarillo*, and then he thought of his nipa and suale shack painted like a courtesan.

The children showed none of Kittenger's dazzling whiteness of color. They were even darker than their mother. Usually when Kittenger arrived home after his long absences they were afraid of him, and had to be cajoled and bribed to friendliness. As the years went along Narcissa withered somewhat, as Malay women do—but Kittenger never saw; he viewed her always as very young, sitting on her heels, faintly coquettish as he had first seen her. And he kept his purse and his heart at her feet. She scarcely knew the use of either, but she nevertheless accepted both. And Kittenger, in spite of his long absences, was happy.

The flagship went home; another came; after a year or two that one was relieved. But Kittenger always remained behind on the new flagship. Apparently he was as firmly a part of the Asiatic Station as the Philippine Islands or the Shanghai Bund. He became a

repository of a vast information concerning decisions, precedents, local history, local persons: a man invaluable to a commander in chief, for in those limited subjects which his mind could grasp he was infallible.

Narcissa gathered relatives around her as Filipinos in prosperity invariably do. They slept on the floor and under the house and they seemed without end. They tethered fighting cocks to the fence and they sat on the steps in mosquito net shirts, tail outside trousers, and chatted interminably. The women seemed always to work at something but never to finish it. And they were all mild, cheerful and peaceful. Kittenger resented their presence, but he always went away in a day or two and they remained. He got used to the smell of cocoanut oil, even in time got to like it, and used to dream of it as he dreamed of the dap-dap.

Year followed year into its grave. Kittenger showed gray in his red beard and was stooped a little. And still he visited Manila and Cavite only two or three times a year. He was as much a part of the trappings of admiralship as a desk and a penholder. He was as necessary as a Navy Register or a Regulation Book.

In May, 1910, Kittenger's enlistment expired for the fourth time. He supposed he would ship over: his pay was good, he liked his work—not enough home life, still he was used to it. It was bearable.

Late in April he came south unexpectedly on the old flagship *Quickstep* on some sudden whim of the admiral. They came unannounced; static was bad and wireless was dumb. Always before he had written Narcissa when they would arrive. Sometimes he had even sent a wireless when they were nearing port. The Cavite operators were his friends, and they would deliver for him. But this time static had outsigned him, air impassable. Well, it would be a fine surprise for her. They would drop anchor by midnight, off Cavite. There would be a boat ashore at once, for the orderly with a wart on his nose had sneaked in to say so.

It was two o'clock when he landed. It was a warm, still tropic night; moonlight, fragrant, ravishing. He went eagerly along under the dap-dap trees as he had done twelve years before. The statue gleamed white and noble; the narrow streets were warm and filled with the odors of life: wood smoke, perfume, offal. The rankness of it was seductive. Dogs barked, lizards chirruped, beetles shrilled, little weeping raindrops glittered on the banana leaves. It was hot; he wiped his forehead and thunder growled from the heart of the cloud which hovered across the bay over Manila.

His own house was quite dark inside but even the pale moon showed its gay colors, all bright and shameless. He entered very softly. He would call Narcissa presently—no, he would light a match first so he could see her surprised face.

He lighted a match. At first it blinded him. Narcissa would be asleep on the bamboo bed in the corner—yes, he could see her now; there she was!

He dropped the match. "Good God!" he whispered gently, and reeled just the faintest perceptible amount. But his mind whirled like a pinwheel. He had seen Narcissa and a man, lying in each other's arms. Yes, it was Narcissa, no doubt of that. And the other was Aquilino Sitgar—"a cousin," Narcissa had said, and a Filipino.

He stood silent in the middle of the room for a long time and his gorge rose like Hamlet's. The rottenness of things! If either of the guilty pair had moved he would have killed them. Indeed, he thought he was waiting for that. But all continued silent, serene, fragrant, and his mind came back. He decided he would see further; no violence—at least not now; but he nevertheless nervously fingered the automatic pistol which he had in his pocket; Admiral Gunnison had presented it to him. Well, he would see, he would go to the bottom; how of the children?

The candles—they would be on the shelf, right here. He reached one, lighted it, and still nobody moved. He could see through the door into the next

room a dark bunch of still shapes which would be the children. He must think of them, too. There were other people asleep on the floors. "Relatives!" he sneered.

He lighted a cigar and looked around curiously. There was a chromo of Admiral Dewey on one wall, and opposite it was his diploma from the Butte Business College. He had hung them both as tokens that this was home.

Then he looked with a curious leisureliness at the figures on the split bamboo couch until he knew them as he knew the folders of his own files or the keys of his typewriter. He sat down at the end of the scrutiny, crossed his legs and called in even tones, "Narcissa."

Narcissa awoke sleepily, blinded with light, protesting. Then she saw Kittenger and screamed, and a moment later, all disheveled, would have wept on his feet, but he spurned her. Her companion was awake instantly. He would have fled like a rat, but he saw the little pistol in Kittenger's hand. He turned pale through the brown of his skin and his speech was a gurgle, yet even so there was something handsome about him, a lithe gracefulness. Kittenger remembered him clearly: he had been around the house always—"a cousin," Narcissa said. Aquilino talked a medley of tongues, begging mercy, avowing that Kittenger misunderstood.

Kittenger cut him off in a hard voice. "Tell the truth," he said laboredly, "and mebbe I won't kill you."

The relatives had melted out of existence. Narcissa sobbed on the floor; the children were awake and huddled frightened into one corner.

"How long has Narcissa been your *querida*?" Kittenger asked very slowly. His face was pale and he perspired as a man at great labor.

Aquilino's eyes rolled in fright.

"Oh, sir," he said softly, "oh, sir, but she is my *matrimony* before you came. She is not true *matrimony* of you, sir; she is *matrimony* of I always. You have being away of much and we have thinking she was satisfactoriness *querida* of you without you knowing of me which is she's *matrimony*." He seemed ready to

fade into nothing; his voice was almost a whisper, his personality just a ghost.

Kittenger saw Aquilino only as a blot of shade, saw Narcissa only as a blur, but his voice and his eye were steady.

"Is that true, Narcissa?" he asked evenly, without looking at her, and in a low tone—a tone of frightful stress.

"Yes, sir," she answered, without raising her face.

Kittenger rose and went to the little window and plucked his beard. Narcissa ceased crying and commenced putting up her hair. As she did she looked at him watchfully: she was afraid, he was incalculable.

"Whose children are these?" he asked heavily, his voice sounding strange in the rattling vernacular of Tagalog.

Narcissa shrugged her shoulders. She did not know.

He looked out the window a long time apparently in a stupor. When he turned around Aquilino had gone—gone silently with the tread of a faint wind. Narcissa had moved. She had slipped on a robe and was sitting on her heels smoking a cigarette. Outside night was melting into day. Solitary voices could be heard and the crowing of roosters went up from every dooryard.

Kittenger walked around the little front room and looked at it all minutely. Then he took down the picture of Admiral Dewey and his diploma from the Butte Business College. These he wrapped with great care in a copy of the *Manila Cablenews*. Then he placed the package firmly under his arm and walked out into the first rays of the morning sun. Not one glance did he cast backward to his shack, which shone with indecent colors in the bright sun, nor did he look at the woman on the steps who sat on her heels smoking. His face was slightly pale, his shoulders slightly dropped, his heart was sick to death; and sometimes he staggered a little.

He did not reënlist. Two months later he came back to Butte. The ramrod straightness of his back was gone forever; his beard was heavily silvered and he wore spectacles. But the manager of

the K. & O. road took him back almost with tears—for Kittenger *had been* a wonderful stenographer.

Kittenger furnished a little room in a dingy boarding house in Butte and decorated the walls with the picture of Admiral Dewey, the diploma from the Butte Business College and a little faded photograph of a napa shack in San Roque, P. I. He lives in this boarding house still. Mostly he affects the company of the younger clerks. Sometimes he talks of the Philippines and they listen with interest.

"I wouldn't do 'em injustice," said he one night over an evening cigar, "but Filipinos are peculiar, not understanding the principles of contract, and not able to see why two trains can't enter a siding at once. But"—and he puffed languorously his cigar—"the women are beautiful."

As this was contrary to the reports of many Americans, and as the subject of women is most agreeable for conversation, the young men sat up.

"Why, I remember one named Narcissa—flower name, you savvy," he went on, "that used to sit on a doorstep in Cavite under a big tree with red flowers, smoking mostly; lots of Spanish monuments around, fireflies and warm air and such things—awful fine creature. Saw her first the day I was countin' the dead—fifty-nine, some mangled—lovely she was—why—oh, she was grand—Tagalog breed o' people."

"Kind of fade, though, don't they?"

asked an old man of twenty cynically. He had eyes of a saint and the complexion of a young girl, but he had already achieved some wickedness.

This was a new idea to Kittenger; he had never thought of it. "Why, no," he said thoughtfully, "why, no—quite the contrary." So he had never seen the droop of Narcissa's firm breasts, the fall of her plump cheeks; never, never would see it, never could. "She was always beautiful," he ended firmly. "She was beautiful—right to the last."

And as Kittenger walked home stooped and silvery through the icy night, even as the young clerk with clear eyes said somewhat sadly, for he was kind-hearted, that Kittenger was growing slow at dictation—"sort of stiff, and I guess the boss won't stand it long"—the manager of the K. & O. was telling an old friend over two hot Scotches that Kittenger was more skillful than ever—"perfect stenographer." He, like Kittenger, was thinking in terms of the memory of a day long since gone. Time could not rob them; their thoughts were as inviolable as faith in God. What had once been beauty and skill ever would be so to them.

"She was beautiful," murmured Kittenger firmly as he stumbled in the door of his lodging, his spectacles rimed with frost so he could not see—"beautiful to the last—I wish to God I hadn't known—I wish wireless had been workin' that night and I wouldn't have known!" and he stumbled into his room.



LOYALTY

By Edith Hulbert Hamilton

I FOUND thee false, and at Truth's shrine
No more I kneel a devotee.
All lies I'll pledge in golden wine,
If I may drink the toasts with thee.

THE HUNTING OF ASTARTE

By George Sterling

IN the silence of a midnight lost, lost forevermore,
I stood upon a nameless beach where none had been before,
And red gold and yellow gold were the shells upon that shore.

Lone, lone it was as a mist-enfolded strand
Set round a lake where marble demons stand—
Held like a sapphire stone in Thibet's monstrous hand.

And there I beheld how One stood in her grace
To hold to the stars her wet and faery face,
And on the smooth and haunted sands her footfall had no trace.

White, white was she as the youngest seraph's word,
Or milk of Eden's kine or Eden's fragrant curd,
Cast in love by Eve's wan hand to her most snowy bird.

Fair, fair was she as Venus of the sky,
And the jasmine of her breast and the starlight of her eye
Made the heart a pain and the soul a hopeless sigh.

And she sent forth her gaze to the waters of the West,
And she sent forth her soul to the Islands of the Blest,
Below a star whose silver throes set pearls upon her breast.

But chill in the East broke a glory on the lands,
And she moaned like some low wave that dies on frozen sands,
And held to her sea lover her sweet and cruel hands.

Then rose the moon, and its lance was in her side,
And there was bitter music because in woe she cried,
Ere on the hard and gleaming beach she laid her down and died.

I leapt to her succor, my sword I left behind;
But one low mound of opal foam was all that I could find—
A moon-washed length of airy gems that trembled in the wind.

I knelt beneath the stars; the sea put forth a wave;
The moon drew up his captive tides upon that shining grave,
As far away I heard the cry her dim sea lover gave.

NOBODY EVER MET HER

By Barry Benefield ? is Woman

THE woman and the girl standing on the front gallery watching the wagon roll down toward the farm's big gate drew their thick shawls closer around their hunched-up shoulders and waited to get the last sight of the boy going away to business college, hoping that he would turn and make some sign to them. But Frank, with young manhood's aversion to the exhibition of tender emotion, sat stiffly on the high spring seat by his little father looking straight ahead.

The wagon went through the gate, turned westward and followed the slowly rising red road that skirted the rail fence for half a mile. Huge Mrs. Jolly, saying she was "chilled to the marrow," scuttled back into the house. Joanna hurried to the end of the long gallery, tiptoeing, she knew not why; and, holding to a post, hung out to catch the last of the wagon before it was hidden, for a moment, by the intervening smokehouse. It occurred to her that the fruit trees in the orchard on the hill would next rob her of the boy, after which the tall sweetgum trees marking the brook that cut through the field would shut him away from her for good.

Jumping down to the ground, she ran across the back yard, climbed two fences, raced up through the orchard, scrambled over the outside rail fence and stood in the road straining her eyes after the two small figures on the disappearing wagon.

After a while, far down the red ribbon of sand, the wagon turned to the left through the green wall of trees and was gone, and Joanna's tiny circular world was left desolate. She stood absent-mindedly smoothing a place in the road

with her thin little foot, biting hard at her underlip to keep from crying. There was no one to see her tears, but emotional suppression had for so long been forced by the silencing loneliness of the isolated farm and the menacing wall of whispering pines that now it was almost instinctive in that environment.

Without haste, stopping long at each layer of rails, Joanna climbed back over the fence. From the hill here she could see all her forlorn little round world. On the flat ground at the foot of the hill squatted the heavy, low-roofed loghouse, long gone gray from the wearing of wind and rain. Her eyes ran on to the aged stable with its swaybacked ridgepole; to the garden with its tottering clapboard fence; to the hundred acres of land now brown where the corn was, green and white where the cotton awaited picking, brown and green where poor, exhausted fields had been left fallow to gather new strength; on to the string of green sweetgums wavering across the farm; and then—the wall.

Whichever way the small, saw-toothed girl sent her hungry brown eyes, they soon were stopped by the wall of pines. The farm was really an irregular square, but the crowding forest somehow obliterated the angles, seeming to become more compactly impenetrable in its circular shape. The branch road came through the wall on the western side of the farm and went out on the eastern side; its points of entrance and exit were shrouded by the trees. Joanna remembered how always when she looked around her from the house all the stealthily stirring pines appeared to be warningly waving her back inside.

From time to time she heard from over

in the woods the blurred barking of a dog or the crowing of a rooster, marking three other farms set within their green walls. But two of them belonged to negro families, and the other to the aged Calloway couple whose four sons had many years ago left home. Thinking of these neighbors did not relieve Joanna's loneliness.

It was nine o'clock now, and though the sun was grateful to feel in the October air, the shine of it was unpleasant in her eyes, so she walked into the thin shade of a peach tree and sat down, leaning her head against the bole of it, staring out ahead of her, her hands lying limply in her lap, considering in a dim, hazy way her case and how the going of Frank affected it.

The byroad passing her father's house went to Arkadelphia, five miles to the west, where it intersected the main road between Minden, the parish seat, fifteen miles to the northward, and Thebes, ten miles to the south; and there were no white families between her home and Arkadelphia. That splendid name stood for one general store, which was also the post office.

Within easy neighborly distance around the store were ten or twelve white families, and up and down the main road they were fairly close together; so that Arkadelphia possessed a young social set that could assemble without large inconvenience for candy matchings, singings at Mount Calvary Chapel, occasional magnificent "balls" with orchestra of violin, guitar and cornet, and for very frequent dances that were delightful even if without other music than the voices of the dancers chanting that ancient, swinging melody, "Skip to Mah Lou, Mah Darling."

Out of practically all Arkadelphian society Old Sim Jolly's daughter had been excluded by a branch road five miles long. Those five miles were a handicap in the contest with the main road girls that had early put Joanna out of the running. The gallants who made dates at the Jolly home undertook to cover five miles four times if the occasion was a "doing" at Arkadelphia. They would have traveled twice as far

if she had been a radiant beauty, which she wasn't; or if so much driving had been necessary to find partners, which it wasn't. There were girls and to spare on the main road.

Joanna was nineteen, and it was quite clear in her head, though she never stated it definitely to herself, nor could have perhaps, that her chief business in life as a woman was to get married, that because of her sex her position must be passive, at least ostensibly; and that, somehow, she *must* contrive to be seen of men. This was the best good of the "doings" at and near Arkadelphia: girls were seen, fires were lighted, things happened. Yes, things happened to girls no more beautiful than she. Look at Mrs. Ada Hoster, Mrs. Lillian Paskert, Mrs. Kate McWilliams.

Frank was seventeen. When she was sixteen and he fourteen she had begun scheming how useful he could be to bridge those terrible five miles into the sight of men. At first, outside of the enforced interests of farming and going to school, he had given himself wholly to hunting and fishing. Within the past six months, however, Joanna had pushed him into the Arkadelphian circle, and he had agreed to ride with her, supposedly for his own pleasure, to and from that center of pulsing social life.

But she had not had time to wear off the awkwardness and timidity forced by her previous segregated life and to make a fair showing, when a slick-leaved catalogue had drifted in through the mail, the business college ambition had been born, and now he was gone. It did not occur to Joanna that her sorrow over the departure of Frank was mostly selfish; her strategy with him had been irresistibly demanded by a stupendous elemental plan of the workings of which she was only dimly conscious, and against which she had no desire to set herself.

Presently she heard the long-drawn call of her father's deerhorn, blown by her mother, she knew, summoning her to the churn. That was her recognized work; she had no intention, no hope, of escaping it; and yet she could not find heart to get up and go back to the house.

Frank was gone. He would not come back; they never did, except occasionally for a week or so to parade their city clothes, or unless shattered fortunes or broken health drove them back. Joanna picked up a handful of sand and let it slip through her fingers, doing it again and again absent-mindedly, faintly conscious of a delicious thrill coming from it.

Puffs of wind shook curling, yellowing leaves over her bowed head. Around the great dark green wall ran the eternally sighing, warning whispers. Away over in the forest an owl, deceived by the gloom of the deep woods into the delusion of coming night, hooted wearily. A dog barked on the old Wyatt place. A rooster crowed dimly on Matt Tyler's farm. Joanna laid her head sidewise against the tree and cried. The dead leaves, that yet had had their full period of appointed life, drifted down gently over the throbbing little body.

II

THE occasional travelers along the byroad always found at the Jolly home not merely ready hospitality, they found eager welcome. When he was at leisure, and that was often, Old Sim—everybody called him that, partly out of contempt, partly out of affection—watched for and waylaid them with an invitation. He was naturally a garrulous, vain little man with what Mrs. Jolly called a "smidgin of learnin'," who felt that the privation of varied conversation enforced by his isolated position was one of the hardest things in life to bear. Jury service in Minden was one of his largest pleasures, and a hung jury of which he was a member was a lucky happening to be looked back upon for weeks with delight. He had been known to tie up a jury for three days, while he reveled the nights through with gossip and war stories, finally giving in to the majority heartily.

Late one afternoon, in the beginning of November, Joanna, looking through a small window in the log wall, saw her father standing down in the road talking to someone in a canvas-covered wagon.

"Mother," she said warningly, "dad has found a flow of soul and a feast of wit down by the big gate." Old Sim was wont to speak thus of lively conversation.

"Is it anybody we know, Jo?" asked Mrs. Jolly.

"I think not. I don't remember the horses; looks like a chicken man's outfit."

"We'd better get a start on a company supper then," said Mrs. Jolly excitedly. "Sim will get him for the night sure. You know he'll never let anybody from the outside escape."

Presently the waiting women inside the house saw the wagon come up through the woods lot and go on down to the stable yard, Old Sim walking by a front wheel talking up at the driver, losing no conversational time. The first steps toward a company supper had already been taken; two chickens had been caught, with the aid of a self-interested yellow hound doomed to disappointment, and killed.

In the busy kitchen there was a great deal of excited speculation, a little of it spoken out, as to what kind of a person the chicken man was. A glimpse caught of his face passing had indicated that he was young. When the two horses, freed of their harness, were brought back to the well for water, his youthfulness was verified. Inspection from the kitchen window disclosed him as a tall, slow-moving, brown-faced man with eager, wide-open, gray eyes, and a long, drooping, brown mustache. Joanna seized an early opportunity to retreat to her room, coming out wearing her new shoes with perforated, patent leather tips, and on her face considerable artificial whitening, plainly called "chalk" by Mrs. Jolly.

Imbry was the guest's name, John K., as the thorough host was careful to bring out upon introducing him at the supper table. By this time he knew the victim's age, birthplace, religion and politics, among other details.

"And how does Mrs. Imbry like your traveling around?" Joanna asked as soon as she could get a chance. "You must be away from home a good deal."

"Oh, I'm not married," the chicken man answered. "As a matter of fact, my wagon is my home. I reckon you all know what we chicken men do; shorely I'm not the first you all have seen. I trade tinware, Bibles, pictures of the Saints and Jesus and the Virgin Mary, simple medicines and the like of that, for money if I can get it; if not, for chickens and eggs, which I sell in the next town I pass through. I stick mostly to Northern Louisiana because I like the country. The biggest part of the time I spend the nights with kind people like you all are, but now and then I camp by the road. I'm fixed for that."

"I think that kind of life would be fun," said Joanna.

She felt that she ought to be ashamed of herself, and was, slightly, though she found that she was glad she had asked the question. He was unmarried, then.

Every night Old Sim had a Bible reading, prompted more by a love of ceremony than by devotional zeal. It would have pleased him to have had also several hymns with organ accompaniment; but there was no organ, and his daughter would yield to the hymns only on Sunday nights. Moreover, the little farmer enjoyed the wrestling of the tongue with the Old Testament names, in the pronunciation of which he himself took tremendous pride. To read a chapter was a test to which all guests were subjected, and upon the basis of their pronunciation he founded his judgment of their erudition.

"Mr. Imbry," he said, the family being seated in front of the fire in the large room to the right of the hall, "we always listen to a few words of Holy Writ, and then each says a short prayer or repeats a verse from the Bible, before retiring. Won't you favor us with a chapter?"

Her husband inveterately used "frilly language in front of company," Mrs. Jolly often complained impatiently. Old Sim rose, and having placed a portly Bible in the hands of the young chicken man, sat down again.

"Which chapter do you want?" asked the uneasy guest.

"Second Kings, fourteen, is a good

one," said Old Sim, sitting back in his chair, puffing his pipe in comfortable anticipation.

The knuckled hands of the chicken man fumbled through the book, and a faint blush showed on the high tips of his bilious brown cheeks. Now and then he trailed a diffident, appealing smile around the family circle, whose members, however, pretended not to notice his embarrassment, until finally Joanna rose and stepped to his side.

"Let me find it for you," she offered. "We are all so used to it here; and then Bibles differ in size and print and the like of that, so you've got to handle any particular one a good deal to find things in it quick."

"I shore am obliged to you, Miss Jolly," he said in a low voice for her ear alone, and looking gratefully up into her eyes. "I sell 'em, but I don't know much about their insides."

"Suppose, Jo, you and Mr. Imbry read the chapter together," suggested her father. "You a verse, he a verse, and so on. The varied voices make it sound more lively."

The lamp on the tall mantel made only a weak, thin light, and the two readers, their chairs close together, laid the heavy Bible on their knees and bent over the print until Joanna felt, with a sudden thrill, that the hair on their temples was touching.

Halfway through Second Kings, fourteen, while her tongue was saying, "And Jehoash, the king of Israel, sent to Amaziah, king of Judah," her knee pressed the chicken man's—she would have sworn on the Bible that covered them that it was accident—and then she eased it away, waiting in an ecstasy of suspense. Though his eyes remained on the print in front of him, the chicken man's knee followed and pressed hers.

"Why, Jo," interrupted Mrs. Jolly, "we can't understand a word you're sayin'. You are readin' so fast, an' your voice is so thick. Read that last verse over."

"Oh, I've got a cold tonight, anyhow," Joanna answered, leaping to her feet. "Let Mr. Imbry read by himself."

Under the Bible she had received her first flaming sex signal. It was disconcerting and, she was ashamed to confess even to herself, delightful.

After the prayers and verse recitations Old Sim said it was time all honest men were abed, classifying himself at once by rising.

"Jo, lay back the covers in Frank's room," he said. "Mr. Imbry will sleep in there tonight. We have just lost a son to business college, Mr. Imbry."

Frank's room was across the hall from her father's, which was the general place of assembly. Her room was back of that. Frank's room had two doors, one opening into the wide hall, the other upon the back gallery, where the water bucket sits in Southern rural homes. Old Sim conducted the chicken man out there for the customary drink before bed.

Joanna lighted a lamp in the guest's room and set hastily to work tidying the miscellany of articles on the mantel.

"I reckon I'll wash my teeth before sleep," she heard the chicken man saying out on the back gallery. "If you'll wait a minute I'll get a brush out of my carpet bag."

Joanna heard him come in the half-open hall door behind her and go to the table. The bag was opened and snapped shut. She stood leaning over the bed, listening, waiting, wondering. Two hands were laid on her shoulders, she was turned around, an arm slid into the hollow of her waist, she was pulled up close against a body—and suddenly she was free again. Within what seemed a second there came to her the level voice of the chicken man out on the gallery talking to her father about autumn turnip greens.

Almost smothering from the pounding of her heart, Joanna rushed to her room, undressed, blew out the light and crawled into bed. She wondered why she had not fought or cried out. "It was so awful quick," she said to herself defensively. She couldn't remember the slightest noise connected with the experience: no scuffling, none of the traditional smacking; it had all been so silent—a strong pull, the crushing of moist

lips, the bristly prickling of mustache on her nose, and the taking away of the lips. The taking away she remembered most distinctly.

In their bed in the next room Mr. and Mrs. Jolly were presently talking a lot of trivialities about the guest. Joanna heard them. Smiling to herself, triumphantly, she lay staring up into the blackness writhing in fantastic, fascinating shapes. "The deceitful thing!" she kept saying to herself. "Who'd 'a' thought *he* would have done *that*? I wonder if I poked out my lips towards his at all? I bet I didn't."

The next morning the chicken man made ready to drive on his way, saying it was possible that he might come back along the byroad in a month or so, though most likely he could not "make the territory again until next fall." Knowing that money could not be offered for the hospitality he had received, he brought in from his wagon a small gift for each member of the family. Joanna's was a shiny, colored lithograph of St. Luke. There was no significance in the choice of the kindly physician for her; St. Luke was simply the handsomest saint he carried in stock.

After the others had gone back into the house, having bidden the guest farewell, Joanna stood on the front gallery leaning her head against a post, watching the wagon roll slowly along the red road, up the hill, around the farm, until finally it was out of sight. Though she doubted if she would ever see him again, there was no poignant feeling of personal loss in her mind. But she was glad the chicken man had stopped with the family overnight. She went back into the house singing.

One man, anyhow, had wanted to kiss her. She *could* attract men.

III

WHATEVER new and entertaining things had come to Frank as a result of his venture through the wall of pines around the farm—and he wrote of many there in St. Louis where he was, as Old Sim reported to inquirers at Arkadel-

phia, "prosecuting his studies"—the life of the rest of the Jolly family flowed on uniformly, one day very like another, all the fresh days about like the old days, except that now and then the weather changed suddenly from summer warmth to winter cold; the weather was the most fruitful source of variety for the family. Frank did not come home for Christmas; he was too busy studying, he declared, and he would complete the course in April.

"Then he'll go right to work somewhere," said his mother, "because the college guarantees to get all the graduates a job."

Between October and January Joanna did manage to get into Arkadelphian society three times, escorted always, in spite of her pride, by her protesting father: once to a singing at Mount Calvary Chapel, which was tame; once to a "Skip to Mah Lou" dance, which was delightful; and once to a candy matching, where in the course of the night three young men tried to fish out of a round hole in the top of a pasteboard box a stick of candy just like hers, one of them succeeding and thereby winning title to a kiss, which he did not struggle hard enough to get—"the bashful fool!" Joanna continued to characterize him angrily every time she thought of the incident.

With the coming of January, however, farm work for the following season's cotton and corn began in earnest, and even in mad Arkadelphia everybody felt that the really gay season was over until the crops had been "laid by" the following summer, though there was an occasional affair of one kind and another on Saturday nights. But Joanna's piddling little father—"piddling" was her epithet of universal derogation—was filled, as usual, with fiery new resolutions as to how he would run the farm that year, and refused to consider anything whatever except agriculture. Her days ran on in an unrelieved grayness, merging so one into the other that she almost forgot that the one-seventh sections of the week were individuals each with a separate name.

The first Monday in January Joanna

got up at six o'clock. There was no pressing need that the family should rise so early, for all that was ever accomplished could have been done easily in four or five hours; but six o'clock was the habitual getting-up time both summer and winter. Throwing on her clothes, she hurried into the kitchen, gratified by the thrill of mere motion. Breakfast was hers to cook, as dinner and supper also. Huge Mrs. Jolly superintended everything and wanted to do a great deal more than her daughter permitted.

Aunt Lindy Lou, Matt Tyler's wife, came shuffling in at about eight o'clock to do the Jolly washing. Joanna welcomed her enthusiastically; she was something a little bit new, anyhow, not having been there since the previous Monday. She hurried through with the first section of her work in order the sooner to seek the recreation of Aunt Lindy Lou's conversation, which, though impeded somewhat by a bulging lower lip ever full of snuff, was at least different from that she listened to all the rest of the week.

Having finished churning and passed on the butter to Mrs. Jolly to work and salt and print, a duty the portly housekeeper fiercely refused to relinquish under any conditions, Joanna hastened to the well, placed a box so that she could lean against the curbing, sat down luxuriously and engaged the thin, acidulous laundress in talk.

Once again she heard how Aunt Lindy Lou had come by the large splattered, shiny scar on her left cheek: she had been bitten by a spider when a child, and her mother, thinking that nothing else could save her life, had rubbed concentrated lye all over her cheek. Once again she heard, because a jaybird happened to fly across the yard, the ancient negro legend that on all Fridays every jaybird goes to hell, each carrying in his bill a grain of sand to help fill up that reputedly unpleasant place.

There was also the detailed account of how a negro woman hostile to Aunt Lindy Lou had slipped into her kitchen and hidden in her cupboard a "hoodoo bag," the same being a small tobacco

sack filled with kinky hair, a pinch of ashes, a piece of a bat's wing and a fragment of a snake's sloughed skin. But having found the bag in good time, Aunt Lindy Lou had sneaked it "smack back" into the plotter's own kitchen, that the spell might be turned, not broken.

"An' hit ware, honey," she said gleefully. "Dat nigger ain' live many year arter dat."

And many more such. They were all old, old stories to Joanna, and eager as she was to talk to and listen to anybody, they would have bored her to sleep if the teller hadn't varied them somewhat with each retelling.

After a while Joanna went in to cook dinner. At the table Mr. Jolly was positively eloquent, as he always was in January, about how he would farm the coming season; how the two negro renting families must be watched and kept working, and working intelligently, so that both landlord and tenants might profit the more; how more "up-to-date methods," read of in agricultural papers, must be introduced; about how the place must be put in tiptop order—fences repaired, house recovered, well dug deeper; about how some blooded hogs must be bought; and . . .

"God 'a' mercy, Sim, hush!" said Mrs. Jolly impatiently. "You get yourself excited the first of every year with a thousand fine plans, an' then in a month or so ever'thing settles right down into the old rut, an' we move along somehow, an' don't starve, an' even send a son away to business college."

"Yes, but if there were another, Virginia, we couldn't send *him*," Old Sim countered triumphantly.

"There's not another, though," she said.

"Another son, you mean," put in Joanna, not looking up from her plate.

Old Sim laughed; and Mrs. Jolly stared hard at her daughter for a full minute.

"Get up an' get some hot biscuits out of the stove, Jo," ordered her mother.

The afternoons were long stretches of barren time to Joanna. The mornings seemed shorter because of the churning,

the tidying up of the house and the cooking of a boiled dinner. From one to five o'clock the house was still. That afternoon Old Sim was out in the fields with his new resolutions, and Mrs. Jolly was in her room before a subdued fire knitting. Joanna sat on the opposite side of the hearth turning the multitudinous pages of a Chicago mail order catalogue—a splendid vicarious trip through a gigantic department store. Then she rummaged about the house in search of *The Key to the Home*, a weekly paper in which she was reading a continued story telling of Lord Orrey of Orrey's Nest, who, if all signs were not wrong—and they were rarely wrong in her fiction—was destined to marry a farmer's daughter. *The Key to the Home* was not to be found by Joanna.

"Stop prowlin' around here like some kind of a night varmint, Jo," called Mrs. Jolly. "Come on in here an' read the Bible to me. Take a chapter out of Job; it may rest us both."

"I don't want to read any Bible," replied the girl from the adjoining room. "I'm going to walk around a little."

Aunt Lindy Lou was still pottering around with the clothes, but Joanna was tired of her. Calling to the Southern family's standard yellow hound, this one named Pomp, she rushed down to the big gate opening on the road as if bound for some definite place on some important mission. Arrived there, she stood leaning against the rail fence looking up and down the ribbon of sandy road whose red dimmed to gray as it came down the hill to the flat ground below. Somebody, she hoped desperately, might drive by, to whom she could talk.

Presently, pushing ajar the gate and getting out on the road, she followed it around the corner of the field to the hill where she had last seen Frank. Under the crowding trees to her right the soft pine needles lay thick and brown. Feeling them to make sure they were dry, as they appeared to be, Joanna sat down, leaning back against a tree, staring across the road into the orchard. A speckled sapsucker went hopping along the bare limb of an apple tree

searching for insects. Joanna let her eyes go with the vigorous, nervous little bird up and down limb after limb—and then he flew away, and she felt bereft.

After that there was a period of no excitement. Nothing went swiftly, nothing cried out, nothing sang; there was almost no movement in all her little world that Joanna could locate with her eyes or ears. Away up in the air the pines were sighing faintly, so that she knew they must be waving their furtive beckonings to everything else to be quiet. She would not look at them; she wished she could not have heard them.

Late in the afternoon things improved temporarily. The chill of night approaching, she got to her feet again. There, in the west, lay the sun on a stupendous bed of loose, violently red plumes. It would presently slip out of sight behind the far wall of the trees, their green now made black by the distance. Down the hill, by the big gate, she heard the belled cow of the family's flock of three coming up the road from the other direction. Joanna walked across the orchard toward the house, and the guineas going to roost in the locust tree in the back yard set up a loud rattling of quarreling queries in the mistake that she was a stranger. The three calves in the pasture behind the stable began bawling for their mothers. Smoke was boiling out of the pipe on top of the kitchen, indicating that Mrs. Jolly had already begun the third meal of the day.

After supper, at which there was little talking, the family sat a while before the fire in Old Sim's room. Then came the reading of a chapter from the Bible, the perfunctory repetition of a scriptural verse, and the three went to bed.

A dim starlight showed through Joanna's one window. The wind, rising with the night, shook the roosting tree in the back yard, and now and then a sleepy, unsteady fowl protested peevishly. A limb of the Chinaberry tree behind the kitchen occasionally reached out and tapped the clapboard roof scrapingly. A dog was barking—perhaps Pomp prowling alone for 'possum—somewhere very far away. Joanna was

asleep. She had completed another day. Of such were the days of Joanna.

IV

THE last half of February was filled with a slow, cold, raw rain. It was a soaker of the first magnitude, as proved by the leak in the chief living room. The clapboards on the roof resisted ordinary downpours, but a long continued attack forced the one weak spot in the joining, through which the heavy drops fell upon a few boards resting on top of the black rafters, thence through a crack upon the center of the floor below. There they were caught in a deep tin pan, their changing accents of liquidity, from the first nerve-battering "tank-tank" to the dreary "thup-thup," marking, for the listeners, the rise of the water in the receptacle, and bringing into the warm room the feel of the dismal wetness without. With every big rain since the forcing of the leak Old Sim had been resolving stoutly to repair it when clear weather came; and then hadn't. He was like that.

Outside, after three days, there lay upon the flat fields extending away to the southward jagged pools of water that the land could not immediately soak up; they lay like ulcers eating their way in. Cattle turned upon the picked-over cotton and corn land for pasturage huddled wretchedly into the corners of the worm fence near the stable yard gate waiting for the irregular dole of cold-weather harvested feed. Without the assistance of the sun, the gray days were robbed of several of the few hours the season allotted them, though to the shut-ins they seemed hideously long. All day and all night, even when the rain held up for a short while, the edges of the roof dripped, dripped into the long puddles running around the house.

Out into this weather, from the hot kitchen, in a spirit of fiery independence, Mrs. Jolly rushed one morning to get a bucket of water from the well, a dozen yards away. Joanna had been insisting for several years that she be allowed to do all the housework, but Mrs. Jolly

had stoutly refused to accept the status of a "peakey, agey woman" because, forsooth, she was, as she admitted frankly, "slightly plump" and had prematurely white hair and eyebrows.

The immediate result of this rebellious trip to the well was a cold, which soon developed into pneumonia; and her husband, zealously wrapped up by his daughter, galloped a horse eight miles up the country for Calomel Johnnie, called so by reason of his almost universal prescription. He was known to have served through the Civil War on the Confederate hospital staff, and Old Sim was certain that whatever mortal wisdom and skill could do for Virginia that Calomel Johnnie would do.

And surely no practitioner could have attended her more faithfully. Once every twenty-four hours he managed to visit her, though sometimes he did not arrive until after dark. The fiery, fat woman was indignant at her continued prostration, and any tiptoeing in the room or out in the hall made her furious. She did not quarrel with Joanna on that account, because the little, high-strung girl habitually flamed about the house while doing the most trivial things, always walking on her toes as if about to topple over.

One day loyal, loving Old Sim, sitting by the bed, put his head down against the covers to hide a sudden flow of tears.

"God 'a' mercy, *stop* it, Sim!" commanded Mrs. Jolly. "A body would think I was making ready for the shroud."

And she was still more furious because the disease had so weakened and clotted her voice that it was barely audible. Beneath her shaggy, snowy eyebrows, her red-brown eyes yet burned with the heat of raging fires within.

After the coming of Calomel Johnnie, Joanna and her father had divided the time into watches, one of them being always in the room with Mrs. Jolly. On the eighth night of her illness Joanna had the watch before twelve o'clock. Shortly after nine Old Sim drifted in from Frank's room and stood before the hearth. Mrs. Jolly being asleep, he

did not dare talk. In his ineffectively energetic way, he kept running his hand back over his half-bald head, smoothing at the fringe of still black hair around the rear edge of it. Finally he took a box down from the mantel, dusted a pinch of calomel over a small chronic sore that he had had on his right temple for years, and, whispering to Joanna to call him the very minute there was any change, tiptoed across the hall to bed. His watch was after midnight.

The only book in sight was the Bible, looming hugely from the corner of the mantel. Getting it down, Joanna opened it on the floor near the fire, and lay down on the bare, polished boards, propping up her head in her hands to read.

The print not interesting her, she turned to the thick pages at the back of the book holding the family photographs. There was her father as a lieutenant in the Confederate army—*wasn't* he a jolly, handsome little fellow? Her mother at eighteen—oh, *she* had been magnificent! The boys would have ridden forty miles to see her, Joanna was sure. And no wonder her father had stopped fighting for a while to come home and marry her; he had been afraid to wait.

Joanna hunted up that standard page in all proper Bibles designed for the succinct account of a family's history. Beneath the ornamental scroll at the top of the page she read:

"Simms Walton Jolly, aged 21, to Virginia Ocey Halsey, aged eighteen, at Marion, Georgia, Nov. 10, 1863."

Joanna lay there staring at this first entry, the red light from the fire playing over her mouse-colored hair, shading the lines of her figure into softness, shining in her wide-open eyes.

There was a stirring of the covers of the bed behind her, and looking around fearfully she saw her mother watching her. Standing up with the Bible in her hands, she moved inquiringly to the bed.

"What are you readin', Jo?" asked Mrs. Jolly.

"I was reading the record of your marriage, mother."

A radiant, triumphant smile flashed across the sick woman's face.

"Dear old Sim!" she murmured, gazing out at the lusty fire that leaped joyfully up along its course through the black chimney into the night beyond. "Dear old Sim!" she repeated huskily. "He's all right."

Reaching out, she seized the girl's hand. "Bend down your ear, child," she said.

Joanna felt her fingers gripped in the fierce, compelling grasp of two hands. She leaned over her mother.

"Jo, I been thinkin' about you, been thinkin' a whole lot. Jo, you get out of this lonesome place—quick! While you're young, Jo, while you're young. *You* understand. Men, they don't know. We women—"

The thick, passionate voice clotted with phlegm, and she freed Joanna's hand with a dismissive gesture. Standing by and helping her mother until she was breathing with comparative ease again, the girl tiptoed back to the hearth and lay down in front of it. The sap bubbled singingly out of the ends of the logs. The leak into the pan behind her was sounding the signal of half-full. Outside, the edges of the roof dripped monotonously into the puddles at the side of the house. Joanna slipped off to sleep; and when she woke her mother needed no more watching.

V

AN hour before daybreak, on a morning in the December following, having had breakfast by lamplight, Joanna and her father were on the spring seat of the wagon going creakingly along the dark road, bound for Minden with two bales of cotton to sell. The early start was necessary to make the round trip in one day, and even so they could not be back until nine or ten o'clock that night. Though Old Sim had drunk copiously of black coffee, he was already lolling about on the seat in the laxity of sleep. His daughter put her left arm around him, took the lines gently from his cold-numbed hands, and, sitting erect, drove

on, her mind working at a momentous secret design.

Somehow, to Joanna, the sun always dwarfed the sky, so that the thick green wall of circling pines seemed very high and formidable; but when the sun was gone the wall lost its menacing height, and the heavens swelled out to vast, open, kindly proportions. It was then that her mind planned most grandly. Her eyes leaped on now from star to star—gold-headed pins barely holding together the soft gray curtains of early morning, that seemed so easy to slip through—and Joanna contemplated the dazzling possibility of a temporary clerkship in Isaac Marcossan's Minden store.

This appeared to her only as a possibility even there, on the starlit road. In the little town in those days custom did not favor the employment of women in public places, millinery shops being considered at least semi-private. But Joanna remembered having noticed that the heavy pressure of trade due to the coincidence of the holiday and the cotton-selling seasons had forced some of the stores in other years to use girls for extra clerks during the two or three weeks preceding Christmas. And her father had for a long time been loyal—loyalty was a Jolly instinct—to the store of Marcossan.

Still, Joanna found it hard to make herself believe she was well dressed enough to stand the rigorous inspection as to appearance to which she thought all the holiday girl clerks must be subjected, so handsomely got up had they all seemed to her. And yet she was wearing her shoes with the perforated, patent leather tips and the corsets that made her feel as if she never wanted another bite to eat, and maybe . . .

Arrived in town at ten o'clock, Old Sim, before driving on down to the corner where the cotton buyers congregated, left Joanna at Marcossan's general store. In the rear of the long, low building, filled with fascinating odors of groceries that made one's mouth water, and with the faint smell of drygoods that set the imagination feverishly to work picturing the patterns, the country ladies were wont to sit

in high-backed, cane-bottomed chairs, awaiting the return of their men folks from the wrestle with the cotton buyers, and bringing money—ammunition with which to attack the alluring stock around them.

Already, Joanna noted quickly, there was a tall, red-headed girl clerk behind a shoe counter; and her trim neatness alarmed the intense watcher. Several times little Mr. Marcossan passed near the ladies, on his way to the boxlike office in a corner, bowing to these his chief mercantile allies with the grave grace born of many years' practice. Joanna studied his finely wrinkled, pink-cheeked face with a new interest, illogically reassured by his snow-white eyebrows, just like her mother's.

Though Joanna, as everybody else in and near Minden, knew this commercial potentate, who carried half the farms of the county tied up in mortgages from year to year, yet he did not know her; she hadn't come to town often enough for that. It seemed impossible to stop him in the midst of all that company, introduce herself and ask him for a position; it seemed equally impossible to follow him into the office where there would be a lot of other people. He did not himself sell anything, except in emergencies, else she would have bought from him in order to talk to him. And she did want very much the offer of a position before her father returned, that she might begin early to batter down any objections he might have.

Joanna hitched her chair as far outside the group of ladies as the crowding boxes and barrels and counters permitted, hoping that Mr. Marcossan would pass near her. He was now in the office. It seemed he would never come out. The store's generalissimo of rat catchers, a huge, yellow tomcat, in all the luxurious leisure of off-duty time, stopped in front of her, looked up inquiringly into her face, and rubbed himself tentatively against her dress. Picking him up and setting him in her lap, she began stroking his crackling fur with monotonous regularity, staring out ahead of her, trying to see her plan

as hopefully as she had seen it at home and on the road.

"You're spoiling that old fat rascal," somebody was saying at her side. Mr. Marcossan was bending over pretending assault and battery on the purring cat's head.

"Mr. Marcossan!"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"You always employ several extra girl clerks here in the holidays, I notice; and I want to ask you to give me a job this year, please."

Straightening up, he looked hard at her.

"Whose daughter are you?"

"S. W. Jolly's."

"Could you sell hardware—crockery, knives and forks, and such things? Of course you could; the prices are marked on everything. I pay a dollar and a half a day. Can you go to work now?"

"Right now?" asked Joanna.

"Right now," he mimicked her banteringly.

"Why—yes, sir."

"Come on then, and I'll introduce you to Mr. Worley; you are to help him. He will show you around."

Mr. Marcossan started on to lead the way, and Joanna, hugging the cat in a rapture of gratitude, put him down easily and followed her savior on.

And so Old Sim, upon looking for his daughter, found her selling a coffee mill to a negro woman. He stood silently by until she had completed the transaction.

"Well, Jo!"

"Well, Mr. S. W. Jolly, what can I do for you today? Come, I happen to know—I won't say how—that you need some plates mighty bad."

Running her arm through his, she maneuvered him out of the hearing of Mr. Worley.

"Dad, I've got a job for two weeks," she rushed on breathlessly. "Isn't that splendid? I'll stay in town until Christmas night. Then you'll be here to take me home, won't you? And next week, when you come in with that other cotton, bring me some more clean clothes. I brought enough in that valise to last me this week. Aunt Lindy Lou

will look after everything at the house, and it will be just as good as if I were there. Better, dad, better; she can beat me cooking all to pieces."

"So you knew you were going to do this when you left home this morning?" he protested.

"And I'll board at Mrs. Lockner's," raved on Joanna to escape his question.

"You know—where we sometimes have dinner when we are in town. Board will cost me four bits a day. I'm going to get a dollar and a half. So I'll clear six dollars a week—almost; I reckon I'll have to spend a little outside. Oh, dad, what do negroes say every summer when they get religion over again at the camp meetings? Well, I'm borned again, honey, I'm borned again; I ain' whut I wuz yistiddy. Oh, hallelujah, I—"

"Never mind that fooling," he interrupted, attempting a stern demeanor.

"How do you know Mrs. Lockner will board you? Her house must be full these holidays, and she may charge you as much to live as you make. What about that?"

"She *will* board me. I wrote to her. It's all right."

"Well, Jo, dog my cats—"

"Now, dad, everything is all right. Here, buy these plates. We need 'em, and I haven't sold a thing since I've been a clerk except that old coffee mill. They're just what we've been wanting. Aunt Lindy Lou will have a fit over them. See, on the bottom side here, it says, 'Made in France.'"

"Damn France!"

"Oh, dad! And you reading all those Old Testament names every night!"

"All right, Jo, all right; wrap 'em up. I've no time or patience to argue with you, but I'll lay you out when you do come home. You're a manager, though; I *will* say that. You're a manager, just like your mother."

Hidden by a pile of crockery, she kissed him, patted him on the back and ran away to wrap up the plates. He went to the wagon for her valise.

The following two weeks were a joyful time to Joanna. Every day in the store she talked to at least a hundred

people, and going to and from Mrs. Lockner's, so long as she was on the three main business streets, she had to twist her delighted way through the crowds packed thick on the sidewalks. In all the thirteen days she did not see a person for whom she did not have a positive kindly feeling, and it seemed that the town itself was beaming upon her. Mr. Worley was amiable, patient and coöperative. In the last week, when she had to work at night for a few hours, he saw her to Mrs. Lockner's. Secretly, she wished that his mustache wasn't so awfully long, that he was ten years younger, and that he wasn't married. She and Mrs. Lockner saw "East Lynne" at the opera house one night. Joanna wrote to her father: "It's a fast life, but I like it."

Once again Frank could not be home for Christmas. He wrote, from St. Louis, that he had married the daughter of "the lady who keeps the boarding house where I have been staying since I came here." He couldn't afford the trip that year, he said; his stenographer's job wasn't paying him a great deal, though it would do better for him as he gained experience.

Christmas Eve late, on the way back home, Joanna was very quiet, and her father had full room to talk. The single snowfall usually granted to this section of upper Louisiana every winter had not yet fallen; but the wind was blowing cold from the north, and there had been for a week hopeful predictions of a white Christmas. Old Sim finally tired of carrying on the one-sided conversation. The two travelers sat gazing straight ahead along the dim road, listening to the creak of the harness and wagon and the sighing wind among the trees.

Shortly after midnight the wagon began the gradual descent of the long hill above the Jolly home, now white and lifeless on the flat ground below. The snow had been falling for half an hour. Straightening up suddenly, Joanna began brushing the small, dry flakes off her shoulders and out of her lap.

"Dad?" she said, a little anxiously.

"Well, Jo, I'm glad you've found your tongue at last."

"Dad, on the first of January I am going to do regular work for Mr. Marcossion. He told me tonight just before we left. He's going to break me in in the drygoods. I'm too good for hardware, he said. And he said, too, that there isn't any reason a girl shouldn't sell drygoods in May or June as well as in December, if she wants to. Aunt Lindy Lou can keep on looking after the house. That will be all right, won't it? I'm so happy, dad; you don't know *how* happy!"

"I'm not," said the little man, looking sidewise out into the whitened dark.

Joanna said nothing for a few minutes. Suddenly she ran her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Then I won't go," she whispered, as if it were a secret.

"Oh, shucks, Jo, I was only saying that to tease you. You go on, honey, if you want to; you go on. I'll be all right."

VI

It would be a mistake to say that Joanna, holding herself in town with her regular clerkship, went storming into the very center of Minden's social citadel. At home, she had never gone out enough to acquire ease in waltzing; and though she was no mean "Skip-to-Mah-Lou" dancer, that form of terpsichorean art was looked down upon, far down upon, by the small town's excessively urban set. And in Minden who doesn't dance doesn't adorn society, which, in static positions, at least under the light, is almost dumb and utterly wretched. Moreover, though the small town's caste system was not absolutely rigid, softening under powerful and not too subtle attractions, yet it had no intention of yielding at once to the first young lady regularly employed in a public place, especially not to a "tacky"—oh, dreadful word!

However, after two or three months, time in which Joanna learned better how to waltz, and reduced the ground for the hideous "tacky" epithet, based chiefly on clothes, she began to make some headway into the edge of what the

Minden *Mercury* often called, with entire justice, "our elite set." And from the very first the "transients" at Mrs. Lockner's boarding house had afforded Joanna unconscious instruction and considerable entertainment.

These "transients" were sewing machine agents, stereopticon peddlers with views of the Yosemite Valley et cetera, opticians stopping for a week, traveling dentists who pulled teeth painlessly (on their dodgers), men who sold machines supposedly (by their purchasers until after the first trial) capable of accomplishing various kinds of household drudgery without any labor tax on the housewife. Occasionally one of these wandering Lotharios went to church with Joanna, or drove her furiously about the sandy streets in a livery stable buggy, or inveigled her, not unwilling, into Mrs. Lockner's dingy, dismal parlor, irreverently called "the morgue of the pale pampas plumes" by the boarders, for a "chat." There was considerable hand-playing on the palm-reading and other aged pretenses, considerable knee-pressing, a few wrecked kisses and as many smacked faces. All this speedily became insipid and therefore disgusting to Joanna. She was tired of experimenting; she was done with the laboratory; she wanted to turn herself loose. She had been only piddling.

In April Lem Q. Jones came to town with a line of novelty goods from a New York house, the James B. Niblick Company. At nine o'clock on a Friday morning he shook Mr. Marcossion's hand cordially; at eleven his three sample trunks were in the back of the store, their contents spread out for inspection. Joanna was attracted by his business rapidity; that way of doing things appealed to her. She did not know that his traveling plan had been made out for him before he left New York, and that he was working according to schedule.

Called into consultation by Mr. Marcossion, she was introduced to the salesman. His attitude toward her, contrary to that of the few other drummers she had thus far seen in the store, contrary to that of the Lockner Lotharios,

was nervously respectful, almost timid, carrying with it a pleasing surprise, a delicate though an obviously undesignated appeal to her vanity. In the excuse that a little silver stamp case was no longer carried in stock by his house, he besought her to take it out of his way.

Late in the afternoon his selling in Minden was done, his trunks had been moved back to the railway station and he had told Mr. Marcossion good-bye. Passing by Joanna's counter on his way to the front door, he raised his hat, looked wistfully at her, hesitated, stopped.

"I'm all out of handkerchiefs, Miss Jolly," he said, "and I want half a dozen. I'll catch up with my laundry in Bellevue tomorrow. Besides, I wanted to tell you what a delight it has been to meet you; we drummers don't often see so much straightforward sense and good looks in one person."

"I'm mighty glad, Mr. Jones, you say that *after* we have bought our bill of goods," she replied, smiling, "else I might shy at the compliment. My gracious, I believe I'm so thankful to you that I'm blushing."

"Well, you *are* blushing," he said, lowering his voice below the hearing of a nearby clerk, "and you *are* a peach."

Joanna turned to pull out the handkerchief boxes, biting at her underlip, her breath coming with smothering difficulty.

Having wrapped up his purchase, she waited, leaning back against the cases behind her. She knew, instinctively, that this was not all. Jones shoved the package absent-mindedly into his coat pocket, and sat sidewise on a customer's stool staring down between his feet. It astounded Joanna to see bashfulness in a city man. Like most rural and small-town people, she had had the fullest faith that all men and women from the big cities are either brave or brazen, never bashful.

"Look here, Miss Jolly," Jones said suddenly, and with difficulty, as if he had just arrived at a hard decision. Facing around on the stool, he stood up determinedly.

"I'm looking," she said, smiling.

"Miss Jolly, I'm going to make Belle-

vue tomorrow, Saturday, and I've been planning to spend Sunday in that lonesome place. Let me come over here Sunday morning—it's only thirty miles—and we'll drive out in the country in the afternoon—that is, of course, if you haven't a date already. Everything looks so beautiful around this town; I was noticing when I came in on the train. What do you say? And now I *must* be going. My train leaves in fifteen minutes. I do wish you would let me come back; I'll be bored to death over there. What do you say?"

Snatching out his watch, he stood looking, alternately, from its face to hers. Joanna puckered up her shaggy brown eyebrows, gazed out into the street a second and then shoved her hand across the counter.

"Good-bye, Mr. Jones," she said soberly. "Come back."

He pressed her hand ardently, and walked swiftly away. She was glad, somehow, that he had not smiled after he had made the date. Her mind was already working hard at the case, and somewhere in the back of her head she was saying to herself, though conscious only of the total impression of the words she thought with: "*This* isn't piddling. It's real. Good or bad? God knows. Good, I think. But it isn't piddling."

Mrs. Lockner's three other regular "paying guests"—standard euphemism for boarders in Southern families—professed to notice, at the supper table, that Joanna was preoccupied. Mr. Turley, the gray and widowed cotton buyer, suggested that she needed a day or two in the country. Mr. Hollister, the young lawyer too new in his profession and in town to possess a home of his own, said ironically: "Ah, the faithful employe grieves over her employer's failing business." Miss Wallace, Rosenbaum's imported (from Kansas) milliner, leaned over the table to advise her confidentially.

"Cheer up, honey," she whispered; "no man's worth a blue minute."

"Leave the dear lamb alone," ordered Mrs. Lockner from the head of the table, with her customary ineffectiveness. She had received the new boarder instantly

into her large and gushing heart, mostly because the small girl offered such a delightful target for the tremulously emotional old lady's endless stock of endearing diminutives.

Joanna made no answer to the sallies referring to her. She ate on deliberately, staring now down at her plate, now at the dining room's opposite wall, as if it did not appeal to her as worth the very small trouble of replying to them. She had a gift for easily freezing people, inherited from her mother.

At nine o'clock Joanna went up to her room on the second and topmost floor; and alone, for Miss Wallace, her roommate, had gone to a euchre party with Hollister. It was already warm in April this far south, and, not lighting the lamp, Joanna pulled a chair to the window and sat looking out across a wide stretch of vacant lots back of the house.

At sundown Minden's cows had come home for the milking from the scattered commons about the town; and now a rollicking gang of their calves raced back and forth across the unfenced ground, tracing wavy, criss-crossed, dark green lines in the dew-white grass. Somewhere, pretty far away, a negro's guitar sounded from an open doorway a kissing, caressing Spanish fandango. The breeze, sweet and moist, stole into the room, stroking the watcher's hair, touching her eager lips, pressing her throbbing body.

Joanna held her arms out into the moonlight. "Lem!" she whispered. "Lem! Lem! Lem!" She folded her straining arms, filled, back up against her firm little breasts.

Some time between ten and eleven o'clock—she had heard the hall clock strike ten—Joanna undressed, let down her hair and got into bed. The sheet had an immodest feel lying against her bare legs, and she drew up her knees and tucked her gown as far down as it would go. The moon shone in on the chair holding her corsets and stockings. Somehow, to Joanna, it seemed disloyal to Lem to let the moon do that. She jumped out of bed, snatched down the window shade, and crept back into bed.

Nothing was to be thought of except

Lem and herself. Joanna's imagination was of the intensely objectifying kind. The thoughts most congenial to her related to things subject to the easy perception of her senses; her imagination was uncomfortable in the presence of thoughts that could not be made to appear concrete. Dealing with things she had never seen, she tore to pieces old memories to build new pictures. Thinking, her mind whirled on like a glorified moving picture film. Fingering nervously the third button on her nightgown, in answer to the physical demand that some muscles keep time with her flying thoughts, she unrolled in her imagination reel after reel made from her acted past and her hoped-for future.

Here was a buggy being driven along a country road; a red, sandy, crunching road, like that near her father's house; a bay horse, with a tangle of brands on his left shoulder, like one she had seen from Hedge's livery stable.

Here was Jim Potter, the expressman, delivering a package; she was untying the stiff gilt strings on it; she saw the first row of dark brown chocolates. Again, she was opening a letter in the store; there was one, two, three, six pages—oh! She went to the back of the store, as if to get a drink of water; now she was reading it, there, out of sight of the other clerks.

Presently Joanna and Lem—she couldn't think of him any other way now—were standing before a preacher in a church. Lem said "Yes" timidly, almost too low to be heard; she wanted to say "Yes" louder, but she subdued her voice, lest he be hurt if she outdid him. They were walking down the aisle. She heard someone in a seat whisper: "Yes, he looks handsome now, but he'll be awfully fat when he gets old." Dear old Lem!

Another reel began in her imagination without a hesitating click. There was a little girl, with shaggy brown eyebrows, in a white nightgown, getting out of bed. Lighting a lamp, and holding it aloft in her right hand, she went into her father's adjoining room. She tiptoed to the mantel, got up on a chair and took

down a bottle of Hopper's Pain Killer (the kind with the man on the label spearing a big, twisting snake). Getting down, and setting the lamp on the floor, she lifted her nightie and rubbed some of the stinging killer on her stomach, inside of which was a Jekyll-Hyde combination of unripe persimmons and sweet milk.

After that she felt better inside. She heard the clock ticking; it sounded *so* loud at this time of the night. Outside somewhere, it must be right near by, maybe on the well house, a screech-owl was quavering dismally. But *she* wasn't afraid of owls. She started back to her room, raising the lamp high to see if she had waked up her parents. They were asleep—her father lying on his side, his head resting on his right arm; her mother, wearing a nightcap, lying on her back. Above the covers, her mother's right hand was touching her father's left.

In a single scene, standing by her mother's bed, she heard her say, "Dear old Sim!"

Here, now, was a bigger girl, with shaggy brown eyebrows, in a white nightgown, standing by another bed, her hair falling over her shoulders. The gown was so long that only her toes showed at the bottom. She tiptoed, rustling so *fearfully* loud, to the tall mirror set in the wardrobe door, and looked at herself. She straightened a bow of pink ribbon in the gown, then tipped back to the side of the bed, standing there with both hands over her eyes. In the next room footsteps were walking back and forth impatiently.

"All right now?" asked a low voice from the other side of the door.

"Oh, no, no," she cried huskily, "not yet."

Biting her underlip, the girl crawled cautiously into bed—and still she made such an awful noise!—and, going to the far side of the bed, turned her face to the wall, pulling the covers up to her chin. The footsteps were sounding more impatient. She wanted to call, "Come in," but she simply could not say it; so she waited.

"All right now?" called the voice

again after what seemed a long, long time to the girl. "I'm coming in."

And she began crying, saying to herself: "And now, after all, I'm afraid."

Downstairs, Mrs. Lockner's street door was banged to, and Joanna's moving pictures stopped suddenly. She heard the very real voice of Miss Wallace talking to Hollister.

"Oh, Lawsy mercy, I'm *glad* she came," breathed Joanna.

Sunday morning, waiting expectantly in Mrs. Lockner's parlor, Joanna received a telegram which said, after the manner of telegrams:

Very sorry cannot come today my house wires me skip six towns suit convenience heavy buyer in Shreveport am jumping westward this morning will write.—JONES.

"Piddler!" said Joanna to herself, folding up the telegram. "Piddler, just like all the rest!"

Then the enormity of her offense fell upon her; she was being doubtful, disloyal. "Dear old Lem!" she hurried to say to herself. "His house works him too hard. *He* would have come if he could."

VII

PROMPTLY Monday morning the expected letter came. It was not of six pages; its one page of hotel paper was devoted chiefly to an amplification of the telegram, though it had this one redeeming sentence: "We are going to take that drive yet."

Lem would be back, then. Joanna buried the letter in the bottom of her trunk with her most precious possessions—a faded tintype picture of her mother at eighteen, an imitation emerald ring now too small for any of her fingers, a silver dollar dated with the year of her birth and the shiny lithograph of St. Luke. The letter was the most precious of all.

Joanna was greatly concerned as to whether she should answer Lem's letter. Its stationery told the name of his hotel. Would he be there when her reply reached Shreveport? He had said nothing of his movements. She would

wait; perhaps he would write more fully next time.

Next time? When would that be? Saying that she needed the exercise, Joanna persuaded Mr. Marcossion to let her make the three daily trips to the post office for his mail. Hers would be with his; she wanted no wasteful minutes between her and any word from Lem. Next to the great trust lying in the dim future, her most magnificent hope lay in these three daily rushes to Mr. Marcossion's letter box.

Twice, going home from work at six o'clock, she detoured six blocks out of her way in order to pass the Cosmopolitan Hotel. There Lem had eaten, perhaps slept once or twice, on his annual journeys through the South and West. Joanna liked to think that the clerk had always given him that corner room on the second floor; it had more windows, by one, than any other room in sight, and she judged that it was the most comfortable in the house. When her imagination had seen him to bed she hurried away, blushing furiously.

On Wednesday morning, a box, obviously of candy, came through the mail to Joanna. She was glad she had received it direct, and not by way of the alien hands of any Marcossion man clerk. At the store she hid it, with a sense of delighted secrecy, in a lace case, and at noon, in her room, opened it. The card stuck under the stiffly gilt cordage said: "Hope you'll enjoy these.—L. Q. J." She ate a few of the chocolates, having the guilty feeling of sacrilege, and then put the box in her lower dresser drawer; she would save the rest, in case Lem came back sooner than next year.

Often at night Joanna slipped into the kitchen to help Mrs. Lockner get the last of the supper on the table, and to listen to the old woman's talk. On Wednesday night that large landlady was eager to pour into sympathetic ears her opinion, excessively derogatory, of a "transient" who had been—well, too transient. In the midst of her ironic imitation of what she chose to call his "millionaire manners" she stopped suddenly.

"Honey, what's the matter with you lately?" she asked, putting her hands on the little girl's shoulders.

"How the matter? Do I look changed—bad?" Joanna was alarmed.

"Oh, no indeedy; a million times no. Far from that. But you stare far away in the eyes. What is it?"

"Look out, Mrs. Lockner; I believe I smell the biscuits burning."

"All right, lambie, keep your secrets, I'll see to the biscuits. It's nobody else's business, anyhow, I reckon."

The late Friday afternoon visit to the post office gained a letter from Jones saying that next day he would finish his work in Shreveport, and that he had decided to run back to Bellevue to pick up his dropped schedule. Was Miss Jolly "still game for the drive?" There would not be time for her to answer; he would take a chance and run over Sunday morning.

Sunday morning at seven o'clock Joanna was up dressing. Miss Wallace, who knew that a drummer was to drive her protégée into the country, lay propped up in bed watching her, and giving such directions as her own ample experience suggested.

"Don't lace yourself so tight, Jo!" she advised. "Your waist don't need it, and you can't make a hit unless you feel good and comfortable."

Miss Wallace loaned her only pair of black silk stockings, the ones with the saucy clocks in them that made you look at them. "But, Jo," she warned, "I'll kill you if you come back here with a hole in a heel. I'm not afraid of you bulging so much that you'll tear one of those open places in the threads; your legs are no bigger than mine, which are *not* portly. Say what you please, Jo, we have the legs of thoroughbreds, anyhow. But you might wear a hole in a heel. If there's any walking to do, and there oughtn't to be much, kind of walk on your toes so the back part of your low quarters don't rub the silk."

"Oh, I walk on my toes most of the time, anyhow," said Joanna with serious reassurance.

"I know it. That's why I'm lending 'em to you."

"Big old fibber! And I'm going to kiss you right now."

Running to the bed, she did it, breaking down the knot of bleached hair all about Miss Wallace's bilious-brown face. Then she hurried back to the mirror.

"Gee, I'd hate to see *myself* now in this frame of hair," complained the veteran milliner. "But that's right, Jo; practise on me. Still, if what *I* have *heard* about drummers is right—of course *I* don't *know* anything from experience—what you ought to be practising is, not how to get 'em, but how to sidestep 'em. Lord save us, honey, don't mess up your hair that way. Just part it in the middle, comb it back and let it go at that. Simple is your cue, Jo; you're too little to be fussy. And the simple stuff makes an awful hit with some men. And I reckon it has with the—er, novelty man, did you say?"

Joanna was too busy to answer. Finally she was done.

"Am I all right behind, Miss Wallace?" she inquired anxiously.

"Honey, you're all right front, rear, top and bottom. What I can't make out at all is how these village cut-ups came to let a chicken like you fall to a fly-by-night commercial gentleman. Of course all women have one set of manners for the general public, men and women, and another set for men only. Which is why I can't possibly and positively know your single buggy and sofa manners, but I should judge, from little things picked up here and there, that you are a—what shall I say—blood stimulator?"

"Oh, I'm not stylish enough, Miss Wallace."

"On January first you were—what *is* the pretty word they use here?—tacky. But now—well, don't you worry, kid."

"If you don't hush I'll have to kiss you again," warned Joanna.

"Double dog dare you to! I tell you, though, you'd better stop this kissing business, and go to practising the elbow guard and the long arm repulse, unless—oh, perish the thought!—you want to be—"

"It looks foolish to dress up before

breakfast, doesn't it, Miss Wallace?" asked Joanna with self-centered inconsequence.

"Oh, if the nosies at the table say anything, tell 'em you're going to Sunday school. And now, if the human cyclone will give me a little room here, I'll rise and make *my* toilette. I hear our dear darling landlady beating a sweet little steak with a teeny-weeny axe, so I guess breakfast is on the way. Did you use any of that red on your cheeks, Jo?"

"No."

"Well, I'd dab 'em just a little before I started."

"Oh, I'd not feel comfortable, and you know what you said about that."

"Put it on. Fifteen minutes after you leave the room you can't feel it, and you can't see it. You'll forget it's there. The men are all the time ranting about the red, but I notice they run after it just the same. Now get out of here. And don't go near the kitchen in those clothes. Go to the morgue and flirt with the pale pampas plumes. Go play a wedding march on the old square piano."

"You know I can't play anything."

"Well, neither can our cultured lawyer. Beat on it, like he does, and make him jealous. Get out."

The bells of Minden are still among its few glories. Its ten churches were built shortly after the Civil War, when the little bayou metropolis numbered thirty thousand people and confidently expected to double that every twenty years. It had, according to the 1910 census, one-tenth of its mid-century population, but its mellow old bells ring of a Sunday as if they were calling the large congregations of its ancient splendor.

At nine o'clock Joanna sat in her room listening to the summons to Sabbath school, and awaiting Lem. The two day trains from the west were due at ten thirty and two o'clock; but he might have come very early that morning. She longed to go downstairs and call up the Cosmopolitan Hotel to ask about him; but she suspected that would be too forward, and, secretly, even yet,

she stood somewhat in awe of the telephone.

After a while the bells rang warnings over the town that Sunday school was over, and that presently the spiritual needs of the older people would be attended to. If Lem should come now Joanna would suggest that they go around the corner to the Baptist Church service. She polished her nails, for the second time that morning. Taking a seat at a side window, she took up her watch down the street. Blushing at the unusual artifice, she began biting and sucking at her long, thin lips to make them redder. The bells rang that the adult sermons were about to begin; it was too late to think of church now.

The noon bells, giving notice to listening cooks over the town that their mistresses would soon be home for dinner and therefore to commence frying the chicken, seemed to Joanna to be flooding the sunlit air with melody just for her and Lem. Lem had called up from the hotel. He would come for her at two o'clock. How was she feeling? He was anxious to see her again. *Anxious to see her!* Throwing on an apron, she ran down to help Mrs. Lockner get the dinner on the table.

At four o'clock she and Lem were out in the red hill country, four miles west of Minden, driving along a fine, firm road powdered with golden sand.

All around them, behind splendid draperies of countless colored shades, the earth and the April sun raged in the first tremendous ecstasy of the reproductive season. Among the trees, to the right of the road, the dogwoods blossomed soft white cups into Spring's marriage robe. Over to the left, where the house and fields were, the young corn and younger cotton ran their long lines out in tender young green. In the orchard behind the house the peach and pear and apple trees dappled the drapery with fluffy pink and black-eyed circlelets of crinkly white. In the front yard two pomegranate bushes stood holding scalloped chalices of voluptuous red. Down by the brook where the wet ground was the violets edged the curtains with rich royal purple.

There was little talk between Lem and Joanna driving through all this. The horse walked on leisurely, carrying them past the farmhouse, past an army of trees drawn up to the road on both sides, over a short bridge spanning a creek swollen with the season's rushing rains.

"You love all this, don't you?" asked Jones finally.

"Yes, all except the pines," she answered slowly. "I hate them, though they are only thinly scattered in the red hill section. Down where I come from they are so thick and high that they make what seems like jail walls around the farms. They used to smother me. Oh, I hate 'em, hate 'em, hate 'em!"

Leaving far behind the farm, crossing a railroad track that sliced its way through the forest, they entered a long, straight stretch of red road between tall, crowding trees that almost touched high above the creeping buggy. Not having felt the whip for some time, the horse hesitated tentatively, stopped, walked on, stopped again and began nibbling the grass at the edge of the road. Neither Lem nor Joanna noticed that; they sat staring straight ahead. The wind stole through the young leaves, as if fearful of alarming them. It shook out into the road, over the man and woman, the thick, fiery perfume of the inciting season.

"Please let me see your hands, Jo," asked Lem, looking around into her eyes. "You won't get mad if I call you Jo, will you?"

"No; I want you to."

"Tell me, must I be jealous of anybody, and want to kill him?"

"I never had a sure-enough man sweetheart in my life."

"Before," he suggested.

"Before," she agreed.

"Jo!"

"Lem!"

Dropping the lines, he opened his arms, and she slid into them, and he kissed her.

Presently, of his own accord, the horse moved on along the road. Jones picked up the lines in his right hand

again. Humming some wordless old negro tune under her breath, Joanna held his other hand captive under the laprobe, playing with its fingers, now and then raising it from under the cover and pressing it with fierce, convulsive tenderness against her breast. Once or twice she got the faint impression that the big, loose-lipped man was actually frightened, but she instantly dismissed the thought as disloyal. She trusted him—and waited.

A red bird flew across the road in front of them, a trailing grass root hanging from his bill.

"Look!" cried Joanna. "He's building a nest."

"Is he?" The big man touched the horse with the whip, and stared ahead sunk deep in preoccupied thought.

A train passing on the track half a mile behind them shrieked for the crossing.

"Gee whiz, Jo!" Jones spoke up briskly, as if aroused by the whistle. "We've got to have supper, and I've got to catch that eight-thirty train, you know."

"I reckon we had better be getting back, then," admitted Joanna seriously. "We've gone pretty far already."

They drove rapidly back to town, arriving after dark. It had been agreed that they should write each other often, and that in November, on his way back from the West to the East, Jones should stop in Minden for several days, so that he could see her a great deal.

Having had supper at the hotel, Joanna saw him off at the railway station, and walked home, feeling herself a sister of the stars.

VIII

BACK and forth along the front gallery running the length of the Jolly loghouse Joanna walked with nervous impatience, watching constantly up the red road that came down the hill from out of the dark green wall of whispering pines. Now and then she stopped at the window of the old family room to look in at her father sitting before the

fire. The weakness of a recent illness lay heavily upon Old Sim, and the usually vivacious little man, his chin sunk far down inside his collar, seemed visibly crumpling in. But whenever she stopped and tapped inquiringly on the pane, he turned his head to smile with stout encouragement lest she run in fearfully to ask if he were all right.

So reassured, Joanna would take up again her quick walking back and forth, watching always up the red road. November had come; and though she told herself she shouldn't dare expect anything so good, yet she did expect that Lem Q. Jones would come driving down the hill to her. And then— Well, when he went away she would perhaps be engaged.

Her mind ran back over his case. Being a woman, and therefore placed in a position demanding unfrankness on her part as to the matter of most importance in life to her, she did not speak with honest definiteness even to herself as to Lem. But being a woman, she had studied minutely, without knowing she was doing it, impelled by the instinct of race preservation, unconsciously using all the life around her as a laboratory, the symptoms of sex progress in a mutually attractive male and female in primed proximity.

Her one buggy ride through the lonely dusk with Lem had not seemed certainly significant. All that he had done and more than he had said several of the frankly flirting Lotharios of Mrs. Lockner's transient flock had done and said. They meant nothing, and she knew it. That's the reason they had been piddlers. From the occasion of the buggy ride and from Lem's awkwardly careful letters since, Joanna judged that when another such set of circumstances were given, with no disturbing train or other thing to interfere, the passion would rise in him and sweep away all the easily understandable cautions against leaping into so dangerous a sea as matrimony, and he would speak.

And then? Well, she was ready. God, she had been ready since she was sixteen, dreaming of a splendid world through whose gates she could enter

only with a husband, the man who must speak first. And once inside the gates that gave freedom to even a woman, she meant to turn herself loose in a joytul riot of loving and working. Neither was joyful without the other, she knew without asking why.

If Lem came down the red road! Joanna ran down the steps and around behind the smokehouse to a point where she could see the farthest visible point of the road; and then, stricken with remorse about the trusting little man back there by the fire, she rushed again to the front gallery.

If Lem came! She had written that two weeks before she had had to come home because her father was sick; but that he was better now, and most likely he would be up in a little while, though, of course, she must stand close by him until that time. Her heart would be broken unless Lem, when he came to Minden, rode down in the country to see her.

There was, she had written, a spare room in the house. She would feed him fried chicken and buttermilk and plenty of egg bread made of new cornmeal. Though she would have to be always somewhere on the farm within calling distance, yet she could trust her father with an old negro servant long enough to show Lem around the place. They could have hours together. He would surely enjoy a day or so in the country after so many days of cities and traveling. Moreover, her father was sitting up now; he was simply confined by rheumatism; and he was a cheerful companion.

This letter Joanna had sent to the post office at Minden, for she knew that Lem would go there when he found she had come home. This was the fifth of November now. He had been due in Minden the day before. Give him a night's rest, give him the morning to bathe and shave and dress and engage a livery stable buggy, give him four hours at the most to drive the twenty miles, and at about five o'clock he should be coming down that red road out there.

Joanna stopped at the window to look in at her father and at the clock

on the tall mantel. It was very nearly five o'clock already. Going to the end of the gallery, she wound her arm around a post and gazed as far back up the hill as she could send her eyes. Then the tense, anxious-faced little woman began once more her fierce, restless pacing back and forth. The mere animal exercise was some relief.

Once, passing the window of the old family room, she was overwhelmed with sudden anger at the small, crumpled figure before the fire. But for him she would have been in Minden yesterday. Not a single hour would have been lost. And last night, riding out on those hills above town, sitting close to Lem on the unimpeachable excuse of the winter cold, she could have felt the welcome rising in him of the tide of passion that she knew was stirring there. Yes, and if her father had chosen his place to live with some reference to his women folks, or if he had changed it, she wouldn't have begun life isolated in a sea of pines with dogs and chickens for companions.

Not that she wanted or acknowledged such thoughts; but emotions do not wait to be asked, or to be run into the mold of words, before they are felt. All at once Joanna realized that she was glaring angrily in at her father. She saw him hitch his chair, laboriously, nearer the fire, and, the ancient Jolly loyalty rising roaring within her, she ran back around into the hall and into the room.

She built up the fire again, dressed the little round chronic sore on Old Sim's temple and dusted it with calomel, and put a blanket around his shoulders, and stood tenderly over him asking him eagerly if she couldn't get him something—his pipe, a glass of milk, anything; she wanted to serve him at once to ease her conscience.

"No, Jo, you go on back out there and take your airing," he said with affected sternness, reaching up and patting her hand where it rested on his shoulder. "I'm all right. Don't you pen yourself up here with me all the time. You reckon he'll come, Jo? I hope so. Go on out and walk, child."

She had had to tell him of the expected

visitor, to explain her afternoon "duding up," as he called it, and to explain the special preparations for several company meals, if for no other reasons.

"A friend I met in Minden," she had said. "He can't be there but a day or so, and I asked him to come down here. You don't mind, do you, dad?"

"Mind? Good Lord, honey, I'm dying for a talk with somebody from the outside," he had declared stoutly. "And I'll try not to be any extra trouble to you. I'll make out like I'm not hardly sick at all: just kind of loafing around with a game foot because the crops are all in."

The darkening edge of the night was already slipping over the world visible to the excited little woman rustling back and forth there on the front gallery in her ceremonial silks. It seemed always to come early down home, perhaps because the land was so low and the trees so high. Unconsciously Joanna was shifting her dependence more and more from her eyes to her ears, listening up the road for the first faint jingling of harness, the irregular metallic knocking of hub skeens on spindle shoulders, the snort of a horse trying to blow unwelcome dust out of his nose and to dampen his dry lips.

Away out in the east, above the dark wall of pines, a long line of moving mountains of white smoke hung over a forest fire, slowly coloring to a blazing gold as the sun sinking in the west shot its colors back across the sky in a magnificent farewell. Joanna, standing still for a moment, watched the south wind slip the gilding mountains, like gigantic beads, on the string of the horizon. Gradually, then, they paled to pink, faded to pearl, darkened to gray, melted all into the coming night. All at once Joanna laid her head against a post and began to cry, and was surprised at herself, and angry; and started walking rapidly up and down again.

She heard Aunt Lindy Lou rattling around in the kitchen. She knew she would have to go back presently and help the weakening old negro woman with the milk and the supper. Aunt Lindy Lou's Tom-Dick boy was cutting

wood behind the house. Deprived of the sun, the smoke-filled air was growing cold and raw and damp, more pungent in her nostrils. Out in the front yard the wind rustled in the leaves of the two great walnut trees, and now and then a heavy nut, loosened by the contraction of the cold, fell to the ground with a sudden, nerve-racking thud.

There was no escaping it—the day was done and Lem had not come. It was too late now to expect him. But Joanna would wait a while longer.

Finally, far up the road, Joanna heard the first faint sounds of a moving vehicle. The joy that leaped up in her died down as she studied the sounds; they were too coarse and heavy for a buggy. But maybe Lem's buggy had broken down; maybe he had hired a wagon and, undaunted, pushed on. She hastened to be proud of him.

Running down to the big gate, she got out in the middle of the road, and waited. The heads of the team came slowly out of the thickening night, and they were the mules of old Hal Wyatt, her nearest negro neighbor. There was only one man on the high spring seat. Joanna stepped aside to let the mules pass.

"Evenin', Miss Jo," called out old Hal himself. "I was over to Arkadelphia on a li'l business, an' I got you all's mail."

"Anything for me, Hal?"

"Yessum, the letter is. Yuthers is papers for Mister Sin."

Joanna tore the letter open.

"Have you a match, Hal?"

"Yessum."

Striking it on the gritty tire of the wheel, she read the first lines in the red flicker. They were enough. Lem wasn't coming at all. The match went out, and she was glad it had.

"Thank you, Hal. Good night."

"Good night, Miss Jo."

Joanna stood leaning against the gate a long time. After a while, yielding to some vague impulse, she looked, appealingly, up and around her. The black wall of pines seemed to have crowded in closer, smotheringly close. There were no stars.

Slowly she went back to the house and took up her work. She didn't see what else to do.

IX

LEM had said in his letter that he couldn't think of intruding into a sick home for his own selfish pleasure, that if only he had the time he would have waited around a few weeks until things eased up for Joanna, but that, in the circumstances, he thought he had better hurry on back East. He would see Joanna on his next trip, and he would arrange his plans so that he could stop in Minden at least ten days.

Though it appealed to Joanna as a hideous thing to admit, yet her attitude as to Lem after this letter was molded by the unacknowledged but very strong feeling that passion that can be overawed by courtesy is a poor and piddling thing; and, in consequence, a mild contempt for him was born in her.

And, it occurred to her in the succeeding days, succeeding months—for time was dragging with Joanna again—that perhaps the courtesy was a mere affectation, an easy excuse; that perhaps he had tired of the tentative affair with her because, in spite of its bounding start, it had developed so slowly since.

Joanna knew, as every woman knows, without ever stating the knowledge definitely to herself, that love to live in men must be fed with more material things than in women, and more often. Not that woman's love feeds on different or higher kinds of things; but that while with them imagined kisses and fancied encounters may sustain the passion for a considerable time, yet a man's cannot live without the realities of which the woman's fancies are the no more noble shadows.

Anyway, he was lost to her now. The result was the only important thing to her. His letters through the autumn and winter had become less and less frequent, more obviously forced; and in the spring his house had given him a Northwestern route that did not permit his coming South at all. Or so he had said. The letters had stopped entirely.

Joanna considered the incident of the novelty drummer closed.

But if circumstances had been such, she often told herself, that she could have gotten into the sight of Lem once a week, say, so that he could hear her and know the inciting caress of her purring laugh away down in her throat, and feel the exciting contact of her ferociously hungry female hands and arms and lips—well, he could no more have escaped her than she had wanted to escape him.

In the last analysis, and she did make that analysis a thousand times, she held the red road twenty miles long and the isolating pine walls responsible for her condition. She hated them, accordingly, more and more as she saw piling up behind her the empty months of her woman's life. Her sole source of diversion, while she watched the months through with her ailing little father, were the unspeakable "farmers' papers" that came; unsolicited, through the mails. They were printed chiefly in Illinois or Maine, on dirty white paper, and all of them had in their titles "fireside" or "home" or some such appealing word.

In the old days Joanna had read an occasional story in them, but now she read them all from cover to cover. They killed time, ignobly. One night in the second winter after the passing of the novelty man Joanna sat before the fire near her dozing father slowly turning the pages of *The Fireside Friend*. She had finished the stories, the impossible recipes written by some city hack writer who ate out of delicatessen stores and cheap restaurants, the "Fashion Suggestions Direct from Paris," the "Hints on Etiquette," a long article on "The Womanly Woman" by a "Woman," the "Helpful Notes" about a kind of farming and stock raising that surely was never on land or sea.

In the course of time Joanna came to the advertisements. Now she read even these. How to grow fat, how to grow lean, how to grow hair, how to remove hair, how to grow tall, how to grow a full bust, they were all there, the familiar old piratical crew. "Do you want to make fifty dollars a week selling books?" "Why not get rich on mushrooms?"

"Big money in Belgian hares." "Fortunes in ginseng." "Wash clothes without boiling." "Do you want to marry?"

"Do you want to marry?" Joanna stopped long over that advertisement. It said that for twenty-five cents a man in Owosso, Mich., would send in a "plain, sealed envelope" the names, addresses and full descriptions of one hundred "eligible and anxious gentlemen" or one hundred "eligible and willing ladies." For a dollar he would enroll either a lady or gentleman in his bureau, and print in his next circular list a description not to exceed a hundred words, furnishing their names and addresses only to interested parties who wrote.

"Twenty-five cents a hundred," calculated Joanna, "which is four for a cent. They are too cheap to be any good." She laughed, but when Old Sim asked what was the matter she answered: "Oh, nothing; some fool thing in this paper here."

And the advertisement remained in her head; she kept seeing in her imagination the heading, "Do you want to marry?" She soon decided that even if she had a list of eligible and anxious gentlemen she could not bring herself to write first to one of them. It would be better to be enrolled on a ladies' list so that she could be written to, "provided a body were to piddle with the things," she always concluded contemptuously. And yet she began thinking of how she might describe herself in a hundred words. What should she put in? Did people put in what kind of man they wanted, or what kind of person one's self was?

Within a week, in order to see how others did it, she wrote for a list of eligible and willing ladies, signing herself "Jo Jolly," so that the matrimonial man would think she was an anxious gentleman.

Ten days later the answer came, which she opened in the perfect privacy of the kitchen. The paragraphed descriptions of the eligible and willing ladies were numbered, a slip of paper called the "key" accompanying it. The "key" contained the names and addresses cor-

responding to the numbered descriptions. Joanna hurried to see how the merely willing, and not the anxious, like the gentlemen, spoke of themselves.

No. 1 said: "Am twenty-two years old, large brown eyes, very fair, light red hair, perfect features, college education in literature. Speak some French. Am of fine old Southern family nearly three hundred years old. Am accustomed to protection and refinement. Wish to correspond with gentleman of refined morals. Do *not* wish to receive postcards. Baptist religion. Some talent in writing and drawing and singing."

The key revealed this prodigy as Louise Hoff, of Bear Lake, Mont. Joanna was somewhat taken aback by No. 1. As for her own family, she had no idea how old it was. All she knew of her ancestors was that her father and mother had come from Georgia, emigrating one year because the cotton crop was bad, and because, as Mrs. Jolly said, Old Sim had always been "flighty."

The description of No. 6, written by the lady herself, Joanna had no doubt, was extremely lively: "Listen, boys! I am, I assure you, only sixteen and don't care much for kissing. Oh, no! I live on the farm and I love the country, love my home and surroundings. Am of poor but horribly respectable family, and am of good character. Have auburn hair and soft brown eyes. No one ever calls me homely. If you send me a stamp I will surely reply. I sing alto and also tenor. All country boys invited to write. I have a sweet name and temper, too."

"They may not call you homely," mused Joanna, "but I call you looney. Let's see what your sweet name is."

The key showed that it was Anna Botta, of Wickes, Ark. Joanna threw herself back into the chair before the stove and sent a sudden, loud laugh up among the kitchen's black rafters, ending in the velvety little purr away down in her throat that always indicated that she was very much pleased.

Skipping a few numbers, she stopped at No. 13, which said: "Soldier's widow by death, 60 yrs old, 5 ft 4, wt 135

pounds, light brown hair turning some gray. A straight form, no cripple, good housekeeper, have my own home, worth \$3,500. Want a gentleman 60 to 70 yrs old and one that has his own home. Do not want a man that is divorced, but a good, true man. Prefer a man living in Kansas. Am right smart on my feet for a lady of my age."

"Sixty years old and still wants to marry," murmured Joanna. "And she's right smart on her feet yet. Poor old soul! God help her!"

No. 14 was another of the lively kind. Her paragraph said: "Hello, boys! Here is the handsomest little lady you ever saw. Age 19, height 5 ft 2, blond hair, blue eyes, large and expressive, olive complexion, Scotch-Irish descent, Christian, kind and loving, prefer city life. Write, boys, and receive a jolly reply."

"Well!" snorted Joanna. "The brazen huzzy!" The qualities of No. 20 took her breath away. No. 20 had this to say about herself: "Bachelors and widowers, what in the world are you thinking of? Old Father Time is waiting for you and me, and I am afraid if you miss this chance you won't get another just like it. Am a widow, brunette, 50 yrs old, 5 ft 5, wt 144 lbs, plain and neat appearing, good-looking, neat housekeeper, have a place for everything and keep it there, never scold or grumble or find fault, no nagger, love home best of all places, no society woman, just old-fashioned homespun creature you can love, trust and depend on at all times, and will have a heart full of love for you. Am ready to marry the right man as soon as found, and the sooner the better, for, as I said, time is not waiting for us old people, so write if you want someone to love and to love you and to make home happy and cheerful and bright in your old age. Write me a nice long letter and I will surely send you one in reply. Have some means. Send stamp for reply."

Over that Joanna merely shook her head sadly, muttering, "Tut, tut, old lady, tut, tut." No. 37 wrote like this: "Am just 21, brunette, 5 ft 4, wt 190, Venuslike form, classical features, dark

brown hair and eyes, lovely complexion. Music teacher, play the piano and guitar. College education, refined, ladylike, and expect the same. Capable of gracing any man's home. Am out for fun and what may follow. Write, boys."

"Now there's a modest little thing," commented Joanna severely. "Venuslike form, height five feet four, weight one ninety!"

Already, however, Joanna was trying to visualize a printed description of herself, built somewhat after the models she had before her. "I am twenty-two," it began, "and am five feet two inches tall, weight 105 pounds. Darkish hair, brown eyes, brunette complexion. I live in the country, but I don't love it. It is too lonesome where I live. I had a good common school education. I went a long time to school because it was the pleasantest place around here to go to. I would be there now if it didn't look silly for a woman to be studying. I should like to correspond with—"

"Bosh!" she interrupted herself. "Correspond with nobody. I'm done with letters, anyhow. They're no good. You've got to be where you can see and be seen. Besides, I wouldn't mix up with that common outfit for anything. Sixty years old and still right smart on her feet! Venuslike form and classical features! Sing alto and tenor, too! Write, boys, and receive a jolly reply! Am out for fun and what may follow! Send stamp for reply! Common as pig tracks, all of them. My God!"

With extreme care Joanna tore the list and its valuable key into small pieces, and threw them contemptuously into the stove. Standing up, she shook herself as if she had been in unclean company. After a period of scornful indignation, she lifted herself to laughter again, repeating scraps from some of the descriptions, and purring softly over them.

She felt that she had escaped making a fool of herself and being laughed at or pitied by strange men; and she was elated.

The next month, however, she mailed a dollar and her description to the man in Michigan. "It's only for fun, any-

how," she told herself to mollify her self-respect. "I'll never hear from it."

And she didn't, and was furious at the Owosso man.

X

THE months drifted on; Old Sim did not improve and did not die, and the little woman attending him went on feeding the bonfire of her emotions, with piteous wastefulness, all from within. Day dreaming at sixteen, in the spring, under the throbbing trees, she had thought that surely she would be the mother of at least a boy and a girl at twenty-three. Now, however, twenty-three did not seem so very, very old; but if at twenty-five, or twenty-six—Good God, she hoped it wouldn't be that long! Before that time, certainly, she would be once more in the midst of people; that's all she asked—to see and be seen. Given a fair chance, she would look out for herself.

But so long as her father was as he was she must stand by him. It occurred that since he could no longer even pretend to do any sort of work they might as well move to Minden and rent a house. That wouldn't do, though, she soon saw, because the little income they received from the two negro tenants on the farm would suffer if all personal direction and advice were withdrawn from them. Besides, rent was free at home, and living generally cheaper. Old Sim and his daughter needed it cheap now.

So she must stick it out. The longer his life, then, the less chance she would have of living, fully. She saw that clearly, trying desperately not to see it, and fighting furiously against the ghost of a wish that would rise in her loyal heart in spite of all she could do that if he couldn't get well he would die, not too late for her, God, not too late.

Old Sim often said now that he didn't care to live any longer. A general breaking down of the system following an attack of malaria, complicated with rheumatism that became chronic, and this horribly painful in damp cold weather, made his days and nights

wretched. As time went on he wanted less and his daughter more to live.

"Jo," he said one day, "you've been a mighty fine child to me, and I *am* grateful. It's a rotten shame you being penned up here so long with me, but, honey, what can we do about it?"

"Nothing," she answered; yet in her mind she could not help adding bitterly: "But you *could* have done something if you had tried when I was sixteen and you thirty-eight."

Then she hastened to say, aloud: "It's all right, dad; it's all right. Don't you worry. Everything will be all right."

It was remarkable what vitality remained in the insignificant physical shell of Old Sim. He could no longer walk even across the room. All his days and nights were spent in a big chair, into the legs of which he had had a wandering carpenter fix some bed casters so that he could be pushed easily from the window to the fire and back again.

It had become so difficult, on account of his weakness, to bathe and shave him that he submitted to those ministrations less and less often, becoming more and more unclean and unsightly. His heart had been permanently affected by the rheumatism, which had inflamed its walls, so that Joanna had to stay by him closer than ever to give the prescribed medicine when an attack came.

After a while, partly for the sake of variety, but mostly in the interest of her future, which she continued to see with invincible hopefulness, Joanna took up the study of stenography and type-writing. When the little man in the chair should die, she would be ready to go out immediately and sustain herself among people.

And the next time she left home she would go farther than Minden; she would seek a larger field with more chances of all kinds; she was aiming at St. Louis. The married Frank, still living and working in St. Louis, often complained that "the women are grabbing the stenography business away from us men." He was a stenographer himself.

Joanna bought her books from a mail

order house in Chicago, and came near bankrupting herself paying Frank for a secondhand typewriter that he bought in St. Louis and sent down to her. It required two years to achieve the speed she wanted. Then she was ready. As fast as her father could read or talk—and his talking voice, to his continued exaltation, remained almost unimpaired—she could take his words down; and, by the clock, she could put them through her machine in a briefness of time ascribed by her books, grandly, only to the Olympians in stenography.

More than once Joanna, after she had been doing her stunts with pencil and typewriter, noticed Old Sim watching her from his big chair across the room, in a dimly questioning, pained sort of way. As his vitality had lessened he had become more and more deferential to her, inevitably, as the weaker to the stronger.

"Are you aiming to be a regular stenographer, Jo?" he asked several times.

She knew that, in his mind, he had completed the question with, "when I have died and set you free."

"Oh, it's kind of fun, dad, to do these things," she always had hurried to say. "We're such a small family now, and you're so little trouble, that I don't have enough work to keep me busy. And this isn't hard; it's easy; it's fun. Most likely I'll never use it. I just wanted to see if I *could* learn the stuff."

"Well, you *have* learned it, Jo. Seems to me you've got it down pretty fine. It would be a rotten shame not to get to use it."

One night in February Joanna finished, with a splendid rush of speed, the transcription of an agricultural report on how to guard cotton crops against the boll weevil, and prepared to go to bed.

"That *was* swift work, Jo," Old Sim complimented her; and several times as she got the room ready for the night she noticed his watery blue eyes following her in a preoccupied stare.

The worst effect of the inflammation in Old Sim's heart was that occasionally it made that organ go on a wild running

spell which threatened to smother him if the prescription left by Calomel Johnnie were not administered at once. In the daytime Joanna was almost always near to see the first indications of an oncoming attack; or, if she were out in the orchard walking, she would leave on guard Aunt Lindy Lou or her Tom-Dick boy, with orders to signal her with the dinner horn the minute he called.

The bell cord that she always put near his right hand before retiring was to summon her in case the attack came during the night. It ran across the room to an old cowbell swinging from a post to her bed, and was so adjusted that a very slight pull would rattle the hoarse clapper just above her head. The first effect of Old Sim's attacks was, of course, an extraordinary stimulation, which always woke him and gave him ample temporary energy to jerk the bell into a tremendous jangling. Then she would jump up and give him the medicine, mostly of digitalis, which slowed down the leaping heart of the little man before it smothered him.

The morning after her boll weevil feat of typewriting Joanna rose at six o'clock and set about her work. Tip-toeing, that she might not wake her father over there by the hearth in his big chair, she made up her bed, swept out the room and then stooped down and started a blaze in the huge fireplace. It wasn't very cold, but he liked to look at the flames.

"They cheer a body up, Jo," he had often explained. "They are so red and lively, and they fight up through the chips, through the sticks of wood, seeming like they're saying, 'I *will* live in spite of everything, doggone it!' And yet, Jo, they look like they're good-natured about it; they're not peevish. But they'll be ding-danged if they don't live. Yes, Jo, I like to look at 'em."

It being now time to go out and begin breakfast, Joanna stood up to ask her father whether he would rather have cornmeal mush or soft-boiled eggs, or both. When she laid her hand on his shoulder Old Sim did not raise his head and smile.

"Dad," she whispered, gently, so that she might not startle him. "Dad, wake up."

"Oh, dad, it's breakfast time again. Wake up and look at the red fire fighting." She had called him louder. "Oh, dad, won't you *ever* wake up?"

Then she got around in front of the chair, and, stooping, pushed back his eyelids, playfully.

"Oh, God?" Joanna cried it out like a question. She put both hands up against her lips to keep from screaming. She stood, for a moment, as stiff as she had felt his body to be, and then, crumpling, she sank down on the floor beside the big chair. "Thank God!" she moaned. "Thank God—at last!"

After a while she was sitting still, staring out across the room, her mind already racing forward to her arrival in the city.

Suddenly she sat up straight; then she leaped to her feet. Her eyes ran along the bell cord from end to end. She gave it a little tug that proved it in good working order. She noticed that the free end of it swung within easy reach of her father's stiffened fingers. Putting her hands over her eyes, she began thinking hard backward.

Presently she turned around swiftly, and leaning down gathered Old Sim into her arms and kissed him in a fury of love. Settling him easily back in his big chair, she walked slowly, unsteadily, across the room, reeled over on the bed, pulled the sheet over her head as if to hide her face, and began crying.

Joanna was sure that the loyal little Jolly had died for her, at least.

XI

JOANNA was at work with a frantic joyfulness that was almost a fever. Around her in that room that had been Frank's when he was a boy, in that room where the chicken man had kissed her, was a wild disorder of things. Joanna was packing up. She stopped often, put both hands up to her face, and jumping up and down uttered little squeals of ecstasy.

She had moved into that room when Frank and his Edith had moved down from St. Louis. The old family room and hers adjoining it she had turned over to them. Old Sim had been dead six weeks now, and though she had always planned to be on a train a week after that event she had found that it could not be done so soon.

To her surprise, Frank had not hurried to agree to sell the farm and divide the money. He was sick of the city, he had said. He knew how to farm, and henceforth he would make his living that way. There ought to be good money in farming if a body used up-to-date methods. There had spoken Old Sim; always orations about up-to-date methods, and always, year after year, with sickening monotony, the same old things.

No, Frank had told Joanna, they would *not* sell the farm; but he would buy her half, for five hundred dollars. True, he could pay her only a few dollars at once, but he could easily cancel the debt within two or three years. Joanna had accepted; she had enough money, anyway, to get to St. Louis, and she trusted herself to get along after her arrival there. She had agreed to stay, however, until Frank had moved his "things"—his things were very few—from St. Louis, and to show Edith "the way around." Frank had requested that.

But now, at last, thank God, at last, the way was clear. Tomorrow she was to make her start. Nothing less than St. Louis would satisfy her plans. She had already arranged, by mail, to live in Edith's mother's boarding house.

Tomorrow morning to Minden in the wagon, the train for St. Louis in the afternoon, the next morning St. Louis itself! And then? Well, she *could* do shorthand. She defied any man to talk on any subject faster than she could follow. Taking from her father's reading voice, she had done large sections of the Bible, a boxful of government agricultural reports, two or three of Walter Scott's novels and a strangely wandering copy of a Meredith novel in his later manner, all the sample letters given in her business college books, and literally

thousands of letters from Old Sim to imaginary correspondents on every subject a lively fancy could think of. Joanna felt that she could take anything.

And *could* she write it on the machine, then? Joanna laughed. Her typewriter sat on a chair waiting to be packed. Putting her arms around the ancient veteran, she hugged it tight; after which, seizing a stray government pamphlet on the hookworm, she charged straight down the first page without an error. Well, then! She was ready.

But now that she was to get out where there were people, men, wasn't it too late? Leaping up, she ran to the mirror above the dresser and scrutinized her face. She ran both hands slowly back over her neck and shoulders, seeking fearfully if there were many hollows and bulging strings.

Well, she would take her chance in St. Louis. She moistened her fingers on her tongue and smoothed her shaggy brown eyebrows. It seemed to Joanna that she was as good-looking—or not any worse-looking—than she had always been. She had never suspected that she was a radiant beauty to the eye, but she wasn't a fright, either. Men did not, having caught a glimpse of her, follow her; but if circumstances put them near her they soon came to notice that she was there. Anyhow, the chicken man had wanted to kiss her, evidently; not a few of the piddling Lotharios at Mrs. Lockner's boarding house had blazed up on short acquaintance; and then Lem—God, if she had only had a fair chance with Lem!

Not that she thought she had lost her last or best chance of happiness in losing Lem as a husband. Joanna, alas, did not believe that of the billion or so of men then living only one had been designated as her happy husband, provided he and she crossed each other's tracks. She believed, rather, that there was at least one man in every village, a thousand in every city, who *could* make her happy, and whom she could live and work joyfully with and for. Joanna wanted only one husband, but she did not doubt that her happy, potential husbands would fill an army. She meant

to make the most desperate efforts to coöperate in the finding of herself by one of them.

It had often filled the tense little woman with troubled anguish to realize that so much of her happiness in life seemed to depend on somebody outside of herself. But so it was. She hadn't made herself. She was merely a hungry half that could never be satisfied until it was part of a whole.

It often puzzled her to think that one matter should loom so large to her. But it was a problem, she understood perfectly without stating it definitely, that sank to a position of relative and comfortable insignificance when adequate arrangements have been made to settle it, and *only* then. People do not have a "morbid interest"—oh, thrice sacred phrase of lily-white souls!—in the dining room *after* they have dined; and, having dined, they find it not difficult to counsel splendid patience, even magnificent abnegation, to those who haven't.

It outraged the sensibilities inevitably bred in her by the apparently sincere avowals current in all the conversation she had ever heard, in all the reading she had ever done, to think of letting men influence her campaign of life. But if a certain kind of desirable lightning was striking all the time in another neighborhood, and not in one's own, it seemed to Joanna very good sense to move to where it was striking.

Though she had never heard a hint, except possibly that night when her mother was dying, that any woman before had ever thought such awful, awful things; and though she accused herself a thousand times as a "bad girl," a "shameless hussy," a "child of the devil," yet she wondered if, as a matter of fact, a few other women had thought like her, now and then.

Anyway, she was going, going, going! It was the thing she most wanted to do in the world. People ought at least to *try* to do the thing they most want to do. She was going—tomorrow!

Turning away from the dresser, Joanna began getting her typewriter ready for its trip. She wrapped it round and round with towels and under-

clothing, tied the padding with strings, and let it down tenderly into the bottom of her old leather trunk. Now let the baggage men do their damdest; her machine was safe.

Having completed the packing of that trunk, Joanna lowered the lid, locked it and stood back to contemplate her work before beginning on her other one. Edith drifted in and sank down on the side of the bed. Edith was a tall, thin, anæmic-looking woman, with very black eyes in a wry, white, narrow face, and black hair that was always stringing down over her temples and forehead. Both hands were constantly wavering lazily around her head making slow, unavailing attempts to put it back in place.

She sat watching Joanna for some time. Then she aroused herself, effortfully.

"Aunt Jo, I do wish you'd come out and help me with that doggoned churning," she pleaded plaintively. "I can't get the butter to come at all. The milk's just foaming all up over everything. It seems to me I have already churned it twice as long and as fast as you do. Please show me how just once more, Aunt Jo."

Why, in the devil's name, did the woman insist on calling her "Aunt Jo"? Edith was only two years younger than she. But, hesitating a moment, she rushed back to the kitchen gallery, finished the churning, and, for the twentieth time, explained the art and science of making butter.

Then she went back to her packing, charging herself roundly for once more failing to *make* Edith help herself. With many large, new resolutions, after the manner of his father, Frank had started in to do a good deal of work himself, and to have Edith do all the housework. There was too much dependence on negroes in the South, he declared. The white people had better learn to help themselves more. Besides, as to Edith, it was now necessary that she do all the housework. Aunt Lindy Lou, the only nearby servant possibility, had grown so old and weak that she was of no use.

For five weeks Joanna had been instructing Edith, ostensibly by lectures, really by demonstrations, in the labor of a farming housewife. That differed in quality and quantity from the work of the city housewife, who had the helps of hydrant water, bottled milk, gas stoves, baker's bread, not to mention the delicatessen store with food already cooked. Moreover, Joanna learned incidentally from Edith, she and her husband had really been at her mother's boarding house most of the time.

It seemed to Joanna as if the wife would never learn the new business laid out for her, as if, somehow, she didn't even have the spirit to *want* to learn it. That, however, was Frank's and Edith's own affair, she had told herself stoutly; and that morning, before beginning on her trunks, she had finally and formally, by turning over the keys to Edith, relinquished her sovereignty of the house. Now, at the first appealing call of one who was a member of the family only by affiliation, the old Jolly loyalty had broken down her firm resolution. But not again that day would she yield; never again after that would she be asked to yield; for tomorrow she would be gone.

After the noon meal Joanna did not hesitate. Rising, she walked out of the dining room, calling back laughingly to Edith: "Well, today I am free. I turn the dishes and everything over to you, madame. It was a *very* good dinner."

Going into her room, she sank down luxuriously into a chair and looked out through the open window at the April green. "Tomorrow!" breathed the little woman, holding out her arms. "Come, tomorrow!"

Joanna heard the dull, thumping hoofs of a horse coming around the house, and looking out, she saw Edith running after Frank. He stopped and got down on the ground. The wife put her arms around his neck, and Joanna, though she could not hear everything they said, did make out that Edith was pleading.

"Oh, there'll be no more of *that*," the listener heard Frank say impatiently,

putting his foot in the stirrup. "I'll be back by nine o'clock, sure."

He got up in the saddle.

"But, Frank," begged Edith, now necessarily raising her voice, "why go to town today when you've got to take Aunt Jo in early tomorrow morning? Couldn't you attend to it then, Frank?"

"I've got to go."

"Oh, Frank!"

"Giddap!"

But Frank had not come home that night by nine o'clock. The two women sat in the old family room waiting for him. The night air was damp and chilly, and before them was a tiny fire, dwarfed to pathetic insignificance by the huge fireplace. Sometimes the little blaze sank below the level of the small heap of chips that fed it, then the watchers were sure that at last it was dead. But one or the other of them would get down on her knees and blow it, and put on a few more chips, and then a puny blue flame changing to red would come out and make them declare they were getting warmth.

"We don't need *much* fire, do we?" suggested Edith after every replenishing.

"No, not much," agreed Joanna.

Frequently Edith rose, and without saying where she was going, drifted out on the front gallery and stood listening up the road. Twice Joanna, taking the lamp in her hand, tiptoed, unconsciously guarding against noise, into her room to make sure she hadn't left anything out of her two trunks that stood, locked and roped, against the wall. Then she tiptoed back to the struggling fire and sat down.

Tonight, as many times since the husband and wife had come to live in the old house, Joanna wondered what it was between Frank and Edith that she did not know. To his sister Frank seemed, except for his added age, very much the same person that had left home six years before. His short, stocky figure was a little plumper, he was now possessed of a scraggly brown beard, his very best clothes had a dinginess and untidiness that formerly he would not have tolerated; but he appeared to her to be, essentially, the same good-natured,

entirely candid, laughing, effervescently ineffective copy of his father. And still, as always before, he was somewhat afraid of her. But Edith knew something about Frank that she did not know, and wanted to know.

Joanna had thought that since she and the wife had been left alone, and especially since this was her last day in the house, Edith might grow confidential; but the thin, drooping woman had said almost nothing since Frank had ridden away. She had groped around, seemingly in an absent-minded daze, her attempts to do the work before her even more futile than usual. In spite of her resolution, Joanna had rushed in to help her.

As the night wore on Edith, more and more often, walked out on the gallery and stood listening. And even when she was in the room, all of her seemed to be down there by the big gate in the dark listening, so that she met Joanna's attempts at conversation with dull, inconsequent answers; and after a while neither spoke. They rocked back and forth, stealthily, nervously cautious against noise, and waited.

From a few words dropped accidentally by Edith when she first came, Joanna had judged that she had "worried too much"—too much about her husband, and other things. The impression had reached Joanna, somehow, that there could be no children to the couple.

Along about one o'clock a rattling of the great wooden latch down at the big gate jangled hideously through the strained nerves of the two silent women, and they leaped to their feet. Joanna leaned against the mantel for support; Edith pressed both hands against her breast as if to help herself to breathe. A horse's feet came thumping up the woods lot road to the front gate, and stopped. They heard slow steps on the gallery, then in the hall.

"Frank!" whispered Edith.

He opened the door, came in, closed the door and stood against it, his chest swelled out, his little figure towering as high as it could go, his face spread with a good-natured grin.

"Well, whash of it?" he called.

"Now you know," whispered Edith to Joanna passionately, as if answering a question that had been spoken. "Now you know why I didn't want to come away down here. Now you know why we were at my mother's boarding house up there so much, why I kept house so little. It was because he was so often without a job, and we *had* to go there."

"Well, whash of it?" called out the little man insistently.

"Up there he was kind of afraid of my mother," the tall, thin woman rushed on, her hands beating against her flat breast, her face lit up by her blazing black eyes. "He's afraid of you, too; that's the reason he's so willing for you to go away. Because he was afraid of my mother *she* could keep him straight sometimes, and even when he wasn't all right I could always go home, there. But here—now—and tomorrow, today, *you're* going away! Oh, my God!"

"The low down hound!" breathed Joanna.

"Don't you dare say anything against him!" cried the wife, leaning against the mantel, and breaking into a slow, dry, hard sobbing. "Don't you dare do it! He's all I've got, all I'll ever have. He's mine, mine, mine! And I love him. That's all. I love him!"

"I know," said Joanna quietly. "God! Don't I know!"

"Well, for the love of Mike, whash of it?" shouted the little man, and, staggering forward, he gave a great laugh and fell on the floor.

Then the women, the two women, undressed him and put him to bed.

The next day Joanna unpacked her trunks. She was twenty-seven.

XII

On another day in April Joanna sat in the room that had been Frank's when he was a boy, in the room where the chicken man had kissed her. Out through the open windows she saw men, riding and driving and walking, hurrying along the red road.

It was always lively on the road these days. Only the year before, on the low,

level, swampy lands below Minden, oil had been discovered. Oil was spouting up out of the ground, and money was flowing into the parish in fabulous streams. Men came with it, many vigorous young men who presently took to themselves a share of the wealth, and built houses, and married, and started full lives on their own account. In the old days it was only at Christmas times that the marriage record was crowded, for the cotton selling season was the one prosperous time of the year then. Now the prosperous time stretched over all the year.

The flood of new wealth had touched Joanna and Frank. Two wells were spouting five hundred dollars a week in royalties, and there were more, many more, to come. Frank was swaggering, almost bursting with importance, torturing his brain how to spend money on Edith and himself. Joanna heard the multitudinous hammers building the huge new house on the hill, to which the family of three was soon to be moving.

The sun slanted in through the end window and laid a hot, white spot quivering on the bare board floor. Up among the black rafters of the old room dirt daubers whirled passionately as they worked their houses of wet mud into shape for new families of children. The two great walnut trees in the front yard before the door shook like rustling sheets of silk under the fiery sweet wind of spring. From down beyond the big gate where the pine forest crowded up close came the ghosts of a million sighs.

Joanna had been looking at a bright silver stamp case, and a colored lithograph of St. Luke that lay unrolled on her lap. After a while she slipped the stamp case into a white velvet bag. She slowly rolled the lithograph on its small black sticks and tied a red ribbon around it. Standing up, and crossing the room, she lifted the lid of a faded leather trunk, and laid the little silver box and the lithograph in the tray among some old stenographic books and catalogues, and let the lid down gently, and locked it. The key grated harshly.

Joanna was forty-seven.

NEW SONGS OF SAPPHO

By John Myers O'Hara

These poems are a first rendition into English verse of three of the fragments of Sappho recently discovered in Egypt. The fragments consist of six poems, a substantial part of which has been preserved. The restored text is by J. M. Edmonds, sometime scholar of Jesus College, Cambridge, England. Mr. O'Hara is the author of "The Poems of Sappho," which Arthur Symonds has declared to be the finest things in Sapphic verse since Swinburne. We consider these translations a very important addition to classic lore.

THE REBUKE

THEREFORE thou wouldst mingle with those and grieve me,
Idlers famed that feast with the wanton lovely,
Bidding thy friends farewell, and still in anger
Swift to reproach me;

May thy heart grow ashen to every pleasure,
Throb with pain for all the insolence spoken,
For my mind is not in the mood to pardon
Faults of a loved one!

II

THE FRIEND AT SARDIS

ATTHIS, our Mnasidica dwells afar
At Sardis, where the shores of Asia are;
And often of her life with us she dreams
When the pale moon across the ocean gleams;

And she remembers how she listened long
Enraptured with the beauty of thy song;
And thought thee like some glorious and fair
Goddess that had descended from the air;

But now among the Lydian girls she shines
As when the star-encircled moon reclines,
With light increasing on the sea and high
O'er dyed lands that deep in roses lie;

THE SMART SET

Ah, Atthis, when she thinks of thee, desire
Runs through her shaken heart like subtle fire;
And borne from far upon the breeze we hear
Her olden cry of passion wafted clear;

And well we know to her the fragrance brings
The memory of love, and darkness sings
With many whispers of the past that we
Lose not across the heart-dividing sea.

III

LASSITUDE

For all too long I brooded by the sea,
And Gongyla, my love, she questioned me;
Pleading that I should let my girl friends know
The shadow of the dream that saddened so;

And I replied: "The Messenger divine
Of Gods was here; O Lord," I said, "be thine
The grace to heed, for in my heart I miss
The poignant thrill and love has lost its bliss;

"And death is in the thought that brings my sigh,
And I would seek the dewy fields that lie
Beyond the world with thee and know no tears,
As Agamemnon once in vanished years."

IV

ABLUTION

Thus drowsy Atthis, laughing at my door:
"Sappho, I vow that I will kiss no more
Thy lips, and every loveliness, if thou
Shouldst still refuse to bare thy beauty now!

"O from thy bed unloosen every charm
Of all thy strength beloved in limb and arm;
And doff thy robe and bathe thee as the white
Lily that leaves the river for the light;

"And Cleis on thee, at thy glowing call,
A shimmering robe of saffron shall let fall;
And we, thy girl friends, in a vestal throng,
Shall wreath thy hair while thirsting for thy song."



THE BROTHER

By Freeman Tilden

IT had all been annihilating in its suddenness. The warden had appeared at the door of Preston's cell and said, in an even tone, as though it were no more than an ordinary occurrence: "You have been pardoned by the President, Mr. Preston." There was a ring of metal as the bolt shot back, and he was free.

It is not the unexpected that staggers the faculties. It is the quick realization of hopes; of hopes piled upon hopes. Preston tried to imitate the calmness of the warden. But his voice slipped out of control, and instead of the nonchalant reply he would have wished to make, he shouted. The man in the next cell bawled: "Shut up, you fool!" Preston wavered on his legs and dropped limply upon his cot. It was some moments before he recovered himself; but when he went out he was steady and self-possessed. . . .

And now he was home. This was his home, his furniture, his library; everything his. Yes, and this was his lawyer, sitting in the big leather-covered chair and waiting, like an astute counselor, for the right moment to break the silence.

Preston walked over to a tall bookcase at one end of the room. The door was of transparent glass; but the way the light shone upon it made it a competent mirror. He was looking at a man naturally robust, but now swimming in well tailored clothes too large for him. The hair had recently been cropped close to the head and had grown out in defiant pugilistic bristles. He shuddered as he saw that; and at the same time he knew that it was a sight for laughter. The glass was kind

enough not to reproduce the pallor of his cheeks and the bluish tinge around his eyes. But this did not help much. He could too easily see what was not visible.

Then the man braced himself. It was literally a throwing back of the shoulders. He went over to the lawyer, placed his hand on the other man's arm and said: "Every minute I get more in your debt, Irving. You've done wonders. You go right on doing wonders. How am I ever going to pay you? Money won't do it."

The lawyer pushed away the implied obligation with outstretched hand. "Nonsense, Robert," he replied. "I've simply done what a lawyer should do for his client. It so happens that we're old friends as well as attorney and client. Perhaps that has added power to my elbow. So much the better."

Preston seemed not to hear the reply to his question. He proceeded: "Yes, you've worked miracles. You've done the impossible. And this last master stroke—"

The lawyer interrupted with a pleased smile. "To tell the truth, I am a little vain about it myself. I can't say I was sanguine about the chances of success. When the news came that the President had granted your pardon, I didn't dare to believe it. I was afraid there was some mistake. And when I found it was really true, my nerves let go like an overwound watch spring. You see, I'd been working against overwhelming odds—public sentiment and the newspapers. You can imagine the reaction."

"It was like that with me," said Preston.

There was a strained silence. Preston rose and paced the floor nervously, with his hands tightly clasped behind his back. Suddenly he stopped short on his rounds and faced the lawyer.

"My God, Irving! What an experience—for me! What an awful thing! I can feel those damp walls around me now; I haven't been able to get away from them. And the uniform. And that odor. And the clank of the door swinging shut—"

"Easy, now, old man," warned the attorney. "Sit down and relax. We'll talk about something else."

Preston shook his head. "No!" he said decidedly. "I can't afford to be a fool now. We've got too much to talk about. We've got to lay plans. Pshaw, what a difference it does make! A year, more or less, out of my life. My business arrangements upset. Of course I'm bound to lose some of my old acquaintances. Well, let 'em go; I'll make better ones. I'm as good a man as I ever was." He pounded on the library table to give himself assurance. "I'll show them whether I'm down for good. I've had plenty of time to think over there."

"That's the way to talk," said the lawyer.

But the effort to convince himself left Preston weak. His voice faltered a little as he added: "I suppose Boyce will steer clear of me."

"You must expect that."

"Damn him, let him!" cried Preston, hammering the table again. "I'd like to wring the cur's neck for him! Violation of the banking laws! Why, I never began to violate the banking laws the way Boyce did. The very day I was convicted, that hypocrite gave the newspapers an interview expressing his 'surprise and sorrow' that Mr. Preston had brought the honorable business of banking into disrepute." His *surprise and sorrow!* At that minute he was thinking, I'll bet, of the worthless paper in his vaults—paper he had loaned himself money on from his own chain of banks. Why, it's an old game. Practically all of them had been doing what I did. And I was sentenced for violation of the banking laws!"

The lawyer smiled. "You weren't sentenced for that, Robert."

"That was the charge," insisted Preston, surprised.

"The charge, yes. But you weren't sentenced for that. Let me tell you something. I once defended a man charged with murder. The evidence was circumstantial; not only that, but of the flimsiest sort. I had the utmost confidence that the State's case couldn't impress a single jurymen. Everything seemed to favor us. When I finished my summing up, you would have said that the jury would probably render a verdict of not guilty almost without leaving their seats. They retired, and in two hours came in with a verdict of guilty—murder in the first degree."

"There is no such thing as justice!" cried Preston bitterly.

"Wait," continued the lawyer. "I was dazed at the verdict. It was a thunderbolt. It was only weeks afterward that I understood what had happened. Then I saw it perfectly. There had been an unusual number of crimes committed in that city within a few months. There had been the usual newspaper talk of police collusion, of the failure of justice, of the menace of lawlessness. The atmosphere was supercharged with the vague terror that takes possession of the public at such times. They were ready to strike blindly at the first definite object offered. My client was that object. He was really convicted before the case came to trial. Not for what he had or had not done. It was simply that society had become fearful of its competence to manage its own affairs. It had to convince itself in some tremendous way, and quickly, that its ideals of government were still sound and effective. It cost a life. Perhaps the life was well spent. I don't know."

"There is no such thing as justice," cried Preston again.

"The trouble is, Robert," said the lawyer, "you've been in the habit of thinking of justice as something indelibly written in a sacred book and laid away in a safe deposit vault. Justice is made fresh every day, like bakers' bread. It responds to the needs of the moment."

You can't say what will be just tomorrow, any more than what will be kind, or wise. Tomorrow will determine its own kindness, its own wisdom and its own justice."

Preston had opened his mouth and then closed it with a snap. The lawyer went on:

"Get it out of your head, Robert, that your jury was actuated by any feelings against you. Remember, there had just been a financial panic, which threatened the very physical existence of thousands. The bankers had come under suspicion—and you were a banker. Do you still think you were convicted of violating the banking laws? Get it out of your head. You were found guilty of being the symbol of social mismanagement. For the moment the point of view of the jury was clouded, and it seemed to them that you were the social manager. They discharged their manager—and put him in prison."

"And they call that justice!" said Preston.

"I call it misfortune—your misfortune. . . . But we're losing time. What we ought to be speaking of is your rehabilitation. There's no difficulty on the money side. In spite of what has happened, I don't think your credit is so very much impaired."

For the first time Preston's face brightened. "You know my financial condition," he replied. "There is plenty of money."

His companion smiled thoughtfully. "Yes, I know. Of course, in the eyes of the public you are all but a pauper. That was necessary. The newspapers have been full of the story of how your trial and conviction had cost you every cent you had in the world. What do you think? A poor little sentimental goose of a woman out in Wisconsin sent me a letter offering to lend you a hundred dollars to provide you with food and lodging when you got out of prison. Rather pathetic, eh?" He looked around at the elaborate furnishings. "If she could see this house! You see, I had to play for sympathy. I struck every string in that chord—weeping wife, fatherless children and that sort of thing. Per-

fectly justifiable. The people, out of sympathy for themselves, put you in prison; well, I proposed to make that same sympathy, turned in your direction, get you out."

The lawyer rose, with a smile, and approached Preston, who was still standing. Irving Harvey was a small man, scarcely reaching to the broad shoulders of his client; but his voice and walk and attitude intimated the restless dynamo that whirled inside. He affected frivolous clothes; even wore a red necktie of the most imprudent shade, as though to announce that he was not intending to take himself too seriously. His hair was banged over his forehead—the last touch of external affectation.

"But what really got us the pardon," said the lawyer, "was your fatal illness. That racking tubercular cough! Those sunken cheeks! Old man, you're an actor. You were the sickest man I ever saw; and I've seen sick men. You almost convinced me." And he laughed heartily.

Preston tried to respond, but his laugh was a miserable failure. "No," he exclaimed, "I can't laugh, Irving. The laugh has gone out of me, somehow." He put his hand to his forehead quickly. "It isn't up here. Something's ripped all the laughter out of me, these last months."

Harvey's face became serious, and he seized the other man's hand. "I'm a jackass, to bray that way," he apologized. "I ought to know better."

"No, no! Of course there's a comical side to it," replied Preston eagerly. "Only I'm too near it just now. In a few months—"

"Certainly. Time—it takes time. But we must be talking about the future."

"The future! That's it!" nodded Preston. "I tell you, old man, I must get to work immediately. I mustn't have time to think about—that thing. I want to be at work again."

"You'll have no difficulty," Harvey assured him. "Just now you think the eyes of the world are on you. Perhaps they are, but only for today. Tomorrow some other big piece of news

will be in the newspapers, and the public can carry only one idea at a time. A year from now you couldn't raise the slightest interest in the conviction and sentence of Robert Preston. It will be an earthquake, or a football game, or a new divorce suit. And by that time you'll be going smoothly along, using your constructive genius in channels that never could interest the public."

"And my friends—or my acquaintances?"

"Don't worry about them. Most of them—I mean those in your own social position—will renew their relations as though nothing had happened. You see, they're all bound to regard your misfortune as something that might happen to them; a sort of indirect attack on them, in fact. It was a technical offense, and a technical punishment. I've made that point clear in all my interviews. A few men like Boyce will try to magnify their own virtues by making bitter denunciations of you, but nobody will listen. It's a closed incident."

There was a silence. Preston was now sitting, with his head thrown back wearily against the high chairback and gazing blankly at the ceiling. Through his mind, cinematograph-like, ran the events of the last months—his indictment, the vicious newspaper cartoons, the mire of sensational newspaper attacks upon his past, even his domestic past, which had been better than the average; the trial, the conviction, the sentence and then—the horrible execution of the sentence. He felt no remorse for anything done or undone; he saw himself only as a scapegoat for wrongs that passed current. He was brimming with bitterness. And though he talked courageously enough about the future, he felt afraid.

Suddenly a gate slammed—one of the iron gates that guarded the entrance to the house. It sent a resonant metallic cry into the house. Preston bounded from the chair galvanically. "What—what's that?" he cried.

The noise had not affected Harvey. He replied soothingly: "One of the iron gates slammed, I should think." He

did not catch the significance of the effect of the sound upon his client.

The sweat showed on Preston's face, and the muscles of his neck worked convulsively. "Damn them!" he almost shouted. "They mustn't do that! That noise! I'll fire them all—every servant in the place!"

"Easy, easy," cautioned Harvey, across whose mind the connection flashed. "Sit down, old man. Your nerves—I know. In a few days you'll be straightened out. The gate got away, very likely; there's a high wind blowing. . . . Don't you think we should make arrangements to receive some of your closest friends—an informal affair—very soon—"

Preston's face went dark again. He pointed to his prizefighter head and drank the dregs of his humiliation in the words: "With this?"

"I forgot," said Harvey, though he had not forgotten; he was feeling his way. "Perhaps it would be better—"

"Every time I look in the glass," went on Preston, ignoring the other's words, "I can see nothing but that. I've got to the point where I don't dare to look." He sat down and covered his eyes with his right hand. "And they call that justice!"

The gate slammed again. Preston came up on his feet for the second time. This time his eyes were dangerously wild. "My God!" he yelled. "I can't stand that. For God's sake, Irving, do something! Ring that bell!" Harvey touched a push button on the long table before him.

A few seconds passed. Then the door opened softly and an athletic-looking serving man entered. Before the man could utter his perfunctory "Sir?" Preston was upon him savagely. "Who the devil is making that—noise?"

"Noise, sir?"

"The slamming of that gate—or something?"

"A short time ago a man came, sir," was the reply. "He had to be put away from the gate by force. He insisted upon seeing you, sir, and made a bit of a row. I think he was intoxicated.

Under the circumstances—we didn't call the police."

The man hesitated, with the shadow of a knowing leer playing around his mouth.

"Under what circumstances?"

"Well, sir, your just being back from your journey—the newspaper reporters and—"

"Right, right!" assented Preston weakly.

The servant became bolder in his tone. "He said he was a member of the family, sir."

"A member of the family?"

"Yes, sir." The man drew a scrap of paper from his pocket. "He thrust this note in my hand and asked me to give it to you. Of course I—"

"Let me see it," said Preston. He read it and started slightly. Then he read it again. "What kind of a man was this?"

"I couldn't see very clearly, sir, but a low sort, I believe."

"If he is still in the neighborhood, bring him to me. Immediately!"

The servant raised his eyebrows slightly. "Yes, sir."

"Up the back way, Pearson," ordered Preston, as the servant was closing the door.

"Yes, sir."

Preston stood looking at the scrap of paper. He turned it over and contemplated it curiously, and then passed it to the lawyer. "What do you think of that, Irving?"

The lawyer glanced at it quickly and passed it back.

"It may be a reporter's ruse to get into the house," added Preston. "If it is, God help the gentleman on his way out again. If it isn't—well, it may be my brother."

"Your brother? I didn't know—"

"No, I never told you. There was no particular reason why I should. You'll learn about him soon enough, if this is genuine. I'd like to have you step into that room there, Irving, if they bring the man in. You might be ready to give a little assistance in case I should need it. You can leave the door open a little. . . . This is the last straw!"

There was a light knock. "Yes," cried Preston. The servant entered. "He is here, sir. Shall I bring him in?"

Preston nodded. Harvey slipped into the adjoining room. "Tell him to come in, Pearson," ordered the master. "You needn't come in yourself. Stay within easy call in case I should ring."

The stranger entered with a manner half bold and half fugitive. He seemed to be forcing himself to overcome a natural timidity. He was miserably clothed, and in his hand he clutched a derby hat whose former owners had abused it. He was thin, even emaciated. The cheeks were sunken; there were blue rings under the eyes, and there could be no doubt with the most casual observer that the last stages of tuberculosis had begun.

But the thing about the man that caused Robert Preston to recoil from him was his head. His hair had been clipped short not long before and now stood out in absurd bristles, gray-black in color. And there was a mysterious glow in his eyes, half bitterness and half begging compassion. He was coughing rumblingly when he entered, and he coughed as he faced the other man.

Preston recovered his poise quickly. He forced a smile and said coolly: "Well?"

The other was disconcerted where he had obviously hoped to disconcert. He drew in his lower lip and breathed quickly. Then he smiled and started forward with outstretched hand. "Hello, Bob," he said.

Preston gave his hand reluctantly. "Hello, James." Then, resignedly, "Sit down."

"Fine tenement you've got here," commented the visitor. "If the old people could see this! Thanks, I will have a bench. Well, well, Bob, the sight of you is good for sore eyes. Let's see, it must be—"

"What do you want?" cried Preston, unable to restrain himself.

"What do I want?"

"Yes, what do you want? What did you come here for?"

"To see you, dear brother," was the sneering reply. "I haven't laid eyes on

you for fifteen years. Fifteen years! It's a long time, eh?"

Preston's fingers were opening and shutting on the palms of his hands. "When did you—er—"

"Last week. I got five years off for good behavior—about five. It would have been a little more, but I kicked the guard in the shins one day. It was worth it, though. Did you ever kick a guard in the shins, Bob? Of course not, though—you're too crafty. You never let your feelings go. . . . Well, the minute I was sprung of course I thought of you. I knew what a kind heart you had. I remembered how anxious you had always been to help me—how you answered my letters that I sent after I was pinched—how you tried to save me from going to prison—I don't think!"

"I never got your letters," said Preston doggedly.

"You're a liar! . . . But I didn't blame you much. You couldn't afford to have your connection with me get out. You were just beginning to make big money in those days. Oh, I didn't blame you. . . . Well, you can imagine how it knocked me stiff when I heard that you had gone to board with Uncle Sammy. . . . Aw, shake hands, Bob! Let bygones be bygones." He pointed to his shaven head and then to his brother's. "We've both been there. . . . Well, yesterday morning I was sitting on a bench downtown, and I picked up this paper. I saw that headline, 'Preston pardoned out. Big financier leaves Federal prison today.' I says to myself: 'That's Bob's regular luck. I'll give him a welcome home.' So I come over here as soon as I knew you was back in town. Your slaves threw me into the street, Bob, first thing. They wouldn't believe me when I told them you'd be crazy to see me. You are crazy to see me, ain't you?"

Preston became angry. "How much do you want? You've come to play the same old game, of course. What do you want me to do?"

"Is that any way to talk to me, Bob?" asked the other man, recurring to his sneering tone. "Ain't we brothers? Sure, we're more than brothers now.

We ought to be pals. What do I want? Just a kind word, Bobby. That's all, just a kind word. There's nothing like doing time to make a man feel for others in trouble. How long were you in for, Bob?"

Preston approached his opponent in a threatening attitude. "I want you to drop that impudent manner," he warned. "I don't want any sympathy from you. We've got nothing in common—understand? Nothing in common. I got into trouble over some technicality. My sentence was purely technical."

"My trouble was a technicality, too, Bob."

"A technicality? Faugh!"

"Sure. I had the cop covered with my gun. The cartridge didn't explode. The next minute he had me. Ain't that a technicality?" He laughed.

"You're a fool," said Preston.

"I know that. If I hadn't been a fool, I wouldn't have been sentenced for twenty years for burglary. I'd have gone to work in some bank and worked up to be cashier, and got the combination, and then walked out with the stuff. Or if I'd had your brains, Bob, I'd have violated the banking laws—ain't that it?—and got away with a million or two, and done a few months' time, and then been pardoned. But you always were the clever boy, Bobby. When we was kids, you could always cheat the eye-teeth out of the rest of us. Don't I remember you traded a sick rabbit off on me for a new jackknife? And the damned rabbit died the same night! Oh, you always had the business ability. You were the slick article."

Preston seemed to hear nothing the other was saying. He said:

"You disgraced us all. You had no reason for going wrong. I got you positions—good positions. I gave you money, when I couldn't afford to. But you took it into your thick skull that you could make money faster by associating with a gang of blacklegs. A safeblower! I suppose you've got sense enough to know that your filthy criminal life hastened your mother's death."

James Preston put out his hand.

"Don't, Bob! That ain't square. That's hitting below the belt."

"It's the truth."

The smaller man sprang up, his eyes ablaze. "You say so! *You* say so!" he exclaimed. "I believe it's a lie. Of course it's a lie. That's the way you always shifted the burden onto others. When I was arrested I gave the name of Sweeney, didn't I? I was sentenced under that name, wasn't I? I'm Sweeney now, for all most people know. Didn't I show some regard for you and the family? What name were you sentenced under—*you*?"

"I tell you, you fool," said Robert Preston, "that's altogether different. Can't you get it through your head that I was guilty of no real crime? Everybody knows it was a damnable outrage. My fair name hasn't suffered. . . . I don't care to discuss it with you. What do you want? What are you here for? You'd better come to business."

"Business. Yes, that's it, business. You've got the head for business. Look at me, Bob!" He threw open his coat, showing a dirty, torn shirt. "I'm a skeleton. There's nothing left of me. I'm a lunger—you can see that. I've been spitting blood for the last two years. I went into the coop in pretty good health. Not that I'm kicking. I got mine—I was caught with the goods—and they treated me as well as anybody over there. You can see that I ain't going to last long. Why, Bobby, there was days when I couldn't get up off my cot. At first they said I was shamming—shamming to get sympathy. Then they gave me the treatment. You know what the treatment is? Well, if you don't, I won't tell you. There's some things it ain't good for a man to know. But after they saw my lamp was going out, they were pretty decent to me. Oh, I've got no kick coming."

Robert Preston tried to be sympathetic, but his "I'm sorry for you" was not convincing.

"Are you, Bob? Are you?" James scanned his brother's face eagerly. "No—you're not. No, you've got the same look as when I used to come and touch you for money in the old days."

"I'll do what I can to help you," said Robert finally.

"Aw, Bob, if you really meant it! Listen, Bobby. Over there I used to sit and count the days, toward the end, and wonder what I'd do when I came out. I figured out there would be some of the old gang to give me a hand. I used to get a lot of satisfaction out of thinking that somebody would be glad to see me, even if it was only a bartender. But they're all gone. There's nobody I know—excepting you. I can't make any more friends, Bob—I ain't got the heart to try. I don't know how. I'm afraid to try. I don't want to. It's a queer feeling. Like a man crying and swearing at the same time. You and me ain't ever been what you'd call chummy. But now—there ain't anybody else. I thought—"

"Well?" The interrogation was freezing.

"I thought maybe—you'd let me hang around till—I'm done. Any old place; a stall in the barn, a corner in the attic, somewhere out of sight, only near enough so I could see you once in a while, just to know there was somebody left. I'm afraid, Bob. My God—I'm afraid of people, of everything! My nerve is gone. Couldn't you find a dark corner, Bob, somewhere?"

"I couldn't do it, James," replied Robert promptly. He had scented what was to come. "I couldn't think of it. I'm playing an uphill game myself now, and—no, it wouldn't do. No! I'll send you out to Arizona, to some high, dry country where you'll get better. I'll give you what you need to be comfortable. I've done more for you than you ever did for yourself; but that's all right. I'll keep on doing it, but not *here*—no, no, that wouldn't do! Why, you ought to know it wouldn't. You ought to be able to see that."

"Not if I kept out of sight, Bob? Not if—"

"Not if anything!" said Robert. Then, with some effort, he added: "*No*, I tell you! There's no use talking about it." He looked at his watch. "Tomorrow, or next day—"

James Preston got on his feet un-

steadily. "I might have known it!" he cried. "Damn you, Bob, you haven't got the soul of a louse! You'd see your own flesh and blood skinned alive, to save yourself. You saw me shoved through the mill, and you never lifted your hand. You knew I was rotting in jail, and you never tried to get me out, or make it any easier, or do anything except take care of your own sweet reputation. Why, if you'd even sent me a picture book or a newspaper or—yes, by God, even a package of rat poison!—I'd have put your image up against the brick wall and prayed to it. It would have been something; it would have been everything. I made up my mind that when I was sprung, if I lived that long, I'd queer you. I'd hound you every minute of your life. I'd let people know whose brother you were. I'd send your nice, swell-dressed friends running away from you like scared rabbits. Then I saw in the papers that you'd been shoved, too. That was different. I changed my mind. Not right away; at first I felt glad of it. But afterward I begun to feel sorry. Then I got out, and I saw by the papers that you'd been sprung, too. I says to myself: 'I'll go to Bob and give him the glad hand. The papers say he's down and out—maybe he is—perhaps he's needing a friendly word.'"

He looked around at the room. "I was a jackass. I might have known that you were slick enough to get away with your sugar. Fifteen years for me, for not getting away with a few thousand. A year for you, for getting away with a few million. If that's your law, damn your law! But now I'm going to even up. I'll bawl you out from one end of the world to the other. I'll let 'em know there's another crook in the family besides you! And a crook with his hair just as short as yours. I'll—"

In a despairing, crackling sob the speaker's voice gave way. He began to cough violently, but his hands still gesticulated the threats his voice could no longer convey.

"Irving!" called Robert Preston. There was no need to call. Harvey was

already at his client's side. "Yes?" he murmured.

"You heard him?" whispered Robert. "He could raise hell, you know, if he runs amuck. The newspapers—"

"Yes."

"Well, for heaven's sake, do something," pleaded Robert. He had maintained himself rather calmly up to this point, but now his voice sank to a whimper; and when he felt his attorney at his side, he wilted like a man that faints after an escape from death.

Harvey walked over to the sofa, where James Preston was half lying, a rumbling, hacking, snarling heap. As he approached James glared at him wildly. Then a sardonic grin swept over his face as he said: "A fly cop!"

"No; your brother's attorney," replied Harvey, in a tone meant to be reassuring.

"That's worse," was the comment from the sofa.

Harvey's smile was nothing less than genial.

"You have no reason to think highly of lawyers, my friend. In your place I should feel the same. Still, there are all kinds of lawyers."

"They're a rotten lot," came from the sofa.

Harvey's geniality increased. "They're all bad enough, I'm sure. I needn't waste time apologizing for overhearing your conversation. I was here first, you see; and when you came, I retired to that room—"

"And glued your ear to the keyhole!"

"No; the door was ajar." He laughed softly. "Well, well, I want to be of service to you both. Half the troubles of mankind arise from misunderstanding: Two fellows with perfectly good intentions toward each other will come to blows—why? They express themselves differently. They can't put their minds in touch. Let's see if we can't put our minds in touch. What do you say?"

"You're as crooked as a snake," said James. "I can tell by your smooth way."

"That is very often the sign of crookedness," assented the lawyer. "But

not always. Let me see if I can convince you of my good intentions. . . . You have been a long time in prison, my friend. You are bitter against men, against your brother, against life. It seems to have been a terrible punishment, compared with punishments for what appear to you as worse misdeeds. It seems to you that society has done you a great wrong. You are right. You have been punished for social mismanagement, of which you are only a millionth-part responsible. Perhaps you recall the scapegoat of the Bible? That's the idea, exactly."

"You'd better hire a hall," said James, scrambling up and starting for the door. "I'm going."

"Not yet, please! You want to know why you should have served fifteen years, when your brother was pardoned after a short term. Don't you?"

The idea seized upon the imagination of the other man. He gave way to his curiosity. "Yes, I do. Tell me that."

"I'll tell you. You understand that people must have leaders, who do for us what we can't do for ourselves. The lives of these men are precious. Where we find a man of large value to us in business life, we mustn't throw him away because he has been guilty of bad judgment, or has succumbed to a single temptation. You see, my friend, you and I can be spared well enough; we have no great genius to cover our transgressions. When we fall, we receive full punishment. But when a man like your brother—a man of great ability—"

"You can't pull the wool over my eyes," said James, starting for the door again. "That kind of talk doesn't fool me."

Harvey hesitated a moment and then began speaking quickly. "Just a word more, if you please. Do you realize, James, that your brother has two children? You must see them! You shall see them tomorrow." He went over and touched James on the shoulder, and talked straight into his eyes. "There is a little girl, eight years old, as pretty and sweet as any picture you ever saw. There is a little boy of six, full of life and innocence, and—well,

very much as you and I were at that age. They love their father dearly—just as you and I loved ours. They wait for his coming home at night, you know, and scamper to him, to have him take them on his knees and tell them stories about the big world. Do you think they know what has happened, James? Why, they believe your brother has been away on a long business trip. Would you destroy that faith and love—would you be the means of letting them know—"

"No, no," came almost involuntarily from James Preston. Then, subconsciously, he left the jaws of the trap and began: "But—"

"Of course you wouldn't," continued Harvey, pressing the advantage. "Think how it is. Their father has come home now. Everything in the house will be as it was. The little boy and girl—you'll see them tomorrow—"

James pointed at his brother. "He doesn't say so." Harvey looked meaningfully at Robert, who nodded affirmatively. "Yes, you see he does. Now, of course, you are not going to do anything to hurt those little people, that little boy and girl, and have them grow up with fear and shame and suspicion in their hearts, mocked at by other children—"

"I hadn't thought of—I didn't know—"

"Of course you didn't. Are you willing to take my word for it that I'll make every effort to help you? Here is my card. I want you to come to me at that address tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, and we'll have a heart-to-heart talk. I want you to feel free to tell me everything that's on your mind. Will you come and talk things over with me?"

"And the kids—can I see them, Bob? Can I?"

Robert Preston saw his brother's trembling lips, heard his tremulous voice; and a wave of feeling, such as he had never felt before, swept through him. He had hardened himself against circumstances. He had encountered adversity, humiliation, servitude, and borne them stoically. But the months

of suspense, of hope, of helpless rage had shredded his nerves, torn the fibres of them until they were at the snapping point. The strange display of sentiment shown by his brother touched him in a vulnerable spot. After all, the family tie is powerful. He braced himself for a new defense; summoned up his waning moral energies for the businesslike reply—and failed.

"I can't do it, Irving," he cried hoarsely. "I can't take advantage of him when he—when he shows that side of him. I can't use the kids against him. It would be criminal. No," he went on decidedly, "I realize you are doing it for my interest, Irving, but I can't stand it any longer. We can't throw him down. . . . Jim, I'll see you through! To hell with them all! I'm big enough to fight for both of us. You can stay!"

"But, Robert—" began the lawyer.

"I've made up my mind, Irving," said the other man, with tight lips. "I mean what I say. Jim, you're going to stay."

There was a moment of awful silence. The rasping, quick breathing of James Preston was the only sound. The two brothers faced each other. James was the first to speak. "You'd do it?" he asked. "You mean to say—"

Robert nodded. Now that it was over, he felt easier.

The first real smile that he had known for years showed on the face of the frail bit of humanity near the sofa. There

was something unworldly about it. Harvey said afterward that he had never seen accumulated hardness so completely erased from the face of a man who had "done time." Suddenly James darted forward and grasped his brother's hand. He began speaking quickly, as though there was not a minute to be wasted.

"Bob," he said, "I was raw. I didn't mean all those things. I'd been collecting them for years, and I had to spit 'em out. You've got to be easy on me, when you realize what I've come through. This is no place for me. I knew it all the time. I had a crazy idea of buttoning onto you for keeps. But you've got me going, Bob; you've put one over on me. You ain't what I thought."

Robert Preston raised his hand deprecatingly.

"No, let me get it off my chest, Bob. I mean I'm going to hit the pike. I'll take your friend's offer. Arizona—any old place; and I'll see that there's no comeback on you—and the kids. I'll wipe myself off the map. It's the right thing. I'll beat it tomorrow."

Robert Preston shook his head.

"Not if I want to, Bob? Not if I go because I'd rather?"

The other man shook his head again.

"Then, by God, I'd go if I had to walk!" said James, bursting into tears.

Fifteen minutes afterward he left the house with Harvey.



AN ANGEL

By Witter Bynner

"**N**OTHING so falls from us as idleness
When we are dead."—
Who he was I cannot guess,
But that is what he said.

SARAH MALONEY'S GENIUS

By Charles Truitt

HIS mother made him what he was, and if we hadn't been sympathetic—a little—we should have hated him. We certainly didn't like her, and there were times when to have laid violent hands on her son would have been the merriest of joys.

She made him dress like a fool—that is, in the extreme of the prevailing fashion. He wore what Wilson called a go-to-hell hat, with a large bow behind. It was a green that never was on land or sea, and it touched his collar in the back. A checked suit went with the hat, a very skimpy suit, so cut that it gave him the appearance of having a weak chest. The trousers ended just above the ankles, and one expected to see lavender socks. That was the single agreeable surprise—the socks were not lavender.

Twenty were his years; and we supposed that he shaved. In charity we granted him that, for how else could we explain the powder that lay faintly upon the delicate pink and white skin and sometimes even showed upon the insignificant nose? His hair was very light brown and a little fluffy—mother saw to that, for she adored his hair and was his maid. She washed and dried it at twenty as she had at five, and was repaid for her care—it was nice hair. His lips were well formed, too red perhaps, and the teeth were quite fine, regular and white. These we supposed he cared for himself, else she would have told us, as she had explained about the hair. She was a very frank woman, and her sense of humor had died when her boy was born. That everyone was interested in her beautiful son she took for granted, so we at the boarding house

were kept informed of those intimate details that concerned his daily life. There was pathos in her foolishness, her utter and complete lightness. That he should be manly and strong, that he should have character, seemed to concern her not at all; but that he should be well washed, conspicuously dressed, and above all should be considered as possessed of temperament and style—that was her aim. He *must* be "different." An unaccountable pair who puzzled us much.

Between them they made the rest of us feel uncouth and coarse, our gestures too vehement, our voices too deep, our tastes too masculine.

One night there came a new boarder, Miss Sarah Maloney, from Manhattan. She was head trimmer for a fashionable milliner on Fifth Avenue, and had come to cheaper Brooklyn to save money with which to start in business for herself.

Tall was she, and brisk, with a lot of bronze hair, the complexion of a farmer's daughter, the health of the farmer's horse and a chin that was a chin. Her face was square. But she did not seem masculine, only capable and husky, and likely to get what she wanted.

We liked her at sight, and from the good-fellow way in which she looked us over we gathered that she liked us, too. We concluded that she probably liked everybody.

Arthur fascinated her from the beginning, perplexed and interested; one saw that easily. She was nice to everyone that first evening, but when she talked to us it was at him she looked. The puzzled expression in her eyes appeared to grow less as the dinner progressed, but the interest remained. She would

look long and then take a deep breath, as if she felt a sense of well-being, of some sort of satisfaction, of something long looked for and found.

His mother was flushed, quite tremulous at the interest this capable-looking newcomer showed, and she began to be nice to Miss Sarah Maloney.

"Your son is very unusual, terribly temperamental and artistic, isn't he?" observed Sarah in a three-quarter tone. There was nothing indirect about Miss Maloney. She wanted Arthur to hear. Ripples of unusualness, waves of temperament, seemed to emanate from his eyes and fluffy hair. He had heard, there was no doubt of that.

Mother looked at us four coarse, ordinary persons. We stood it rather well—she had looked at us that way so many times before. Besides, Miss Maloney had sent us a long inclusive wink. That wink established us, defined our standing. We were men of the world and she a woman of the world; mother and her beautiful son were exotics, designed to divert normal people like Miss Maloney and us.

Sarah had not been in the place a week before she began to call us "boys," and one night she came to the smoking room and made the fifth in a game of poker. Harry Wilson asked why she had not brought Arthur along. We all laughed a bit meaningfully at the question. All the previous evenings she had carried him off to the lounging room immediately after dinner. The exotic seemed to have become increasingly diverting.

Sarah laughed, too. "That's all right, boys; I know when you're stringin' me. I'll admit I haven't been as subtle as I might, but somehow or other subtlety doesn't seem to go with my shade of hair. I want what I want when I want it, as the song says, and I'm an energetic business woman!" The speech was as cryptic as her wink had been Machiavellian.

"If by 'it' you mean Arthur," said Sam Harris, "all I have to ask is: What do you want him for?"

Sarah became serious. "I hadn't looked at that youth ten minutes before

I decided that he was a genius. There are only two or three like him born in a hundred years, and they always become rich and famous. I'm not saying how, nor what it is, but some time I'm going to give him a chance to express himself; and incidentally I won't lose by it myself. Play cards, boys!"

From then on we dropped Arthur as a subject for discussion with her, but were never able to be jealous. Her wink had settled that for all time.

She sent candy to his mother and silk socks to him. Now and then she would fashion a tie from remnants of material brought from the workshop. Rose and violet and pale blue, he wore them all, and somehow or other they didn't seem out of place on him. But *what* was she up to? Once a week she played cards with us in the smoking room, and we always found her a good sort—wholesome, witty, never sentimental; just one of those big-hearted companionable women with whom a fellow would feel he could discuss baseball, politics, plays and books—of a kind—anything but love.

Arthur and she went to the theater a great deal, and they took long walks in the evening. She seemed very tender and sympathetic with him, yet never affectionate. He was always with her or his mother, and avoided us, with whom he appeared ill at ease. We thought that when he walked with Sarah he must slip his hand confidently into hers and feel protected and happy and understood.

One Friday night, our regular card night, Sarah stopped the game at ten o'clock and told us to clear the table. We obeyed without questioning; we always obeyed Sarah. Then one of the colored waiters came in with food, not our boarding house food, but something very different, from the best restaurant in Brooklyn. Back of him came two silver buckets filled with ice and something else. So dazzled were we at sight of that glittering ice that to this day none of us can tell whether it was man or maid who carried those silver buckets.

Sarah dismissed the waiter and began to set the table herself. She seemed a

little excited, a bit embarrassed, and gabbled along of nothing at all as she fussed around. Sam Harris opened the champagne. Sarah raised her glass, and looking at us fondly, like the good pal she was, she said: "Boys, we'll drink to the health of me Uncle Dennis—he's dead!"

"I never saw him, so don't think me an unfeelin' hussy," she added. "But dead he is, and, boys, he left me forty thousand dollars—bless him!"

We all rushed to shake hands with her, shouting our congratulations. When the storm had subsided, she coughed nervously and her complexion matched her hair for a moment. Then she pulled herself together and laughed.

"And, boys, this is me bachelor supper, as it were. I'm going to be married tomorrow!"

We all began to sing "For she's a jolly good fellow," but ended lamely, for as we sang a fearful suspicion came to us—she was going to marry Honeyboy!

And she did, the next day, before a justice of the peace in Hoboken, and they went to Paris on their honeymoon. Arthur's mother went, too. Sarah had married them both.

The boarding house seemed very drab after that. We missed Sarah, our very good pal; we missed Arthur and his mother: their moods and tenses, all their oddities, had meant more of entertainment than we thought.

And we wondered what the deuce Sarah possibly could do with or for him.

About two months later came a large square envelope addressed to us collectively. In it was an engraved card:

MADAME SARA MALONEY
HONEYBOY

HATS

Fifth Avenue.

And on the card was written:

DEAR OLD BOYS:

Come some Saturday afternoon to see your pal Sara in her shop. And don't guy her French accent—it's part of the hat business.

Go we did one Saturday. Back of the small leaded panes of glass that made up the window of Madame Honeyboy's smart little shop were three hats. Even

we, who knew nothing of such things, were caught by the note of *chic*, and decided that Sarah was indeed a milliner of distinction, and undoubtedly of great expensiveness. We went in, rather shamefaced, hoping that no one whom we knew had seen us.

She greeted us with outstretched arms.

"Boys, I'm that glad to see you, I'd run to you," she said, "if me skirt would let me. But look at me! I'm *that* stylish—*eh, quoi?*"

She was rouged a bit and her eyebrows were lengthened. The effect was decidedly foreign. She also looked very happy.

"I don't wish to swagger, *mes garçons*," she cried gaily. "But I might mention that your friend Maloney-Honeyboy has sold seven hundred dollars' worth of creations in two weeks!"

"Sarah, you are certainly a milliner," grinned Harris admiringly. "We took in the three *chapeaux* in your window, and to our mere mannish eyes they are—*ma foi, exquis!*"

"They are '*exquis*,' monsieur—the work of a *genius!*" she exclaimed proudly.

"How's Arthur?" asked Wilson.

Madame Honeyboy laid a finger tip upon her lip. She beckoned us to follow, and tiptoed mysteriously toward a door, the handle of which she turned very slowly.

We peered through the crack in the door. Before a hat on a pivot sat Arthur Honeyboy. His eyes were fixed upon the hat; his attitude was one of deep concentration. His mouth was full of pins.

Suddenly his long, slender fingers caught up a bit of ribbon from the table. Quickly, deftly they fashioned a bow. He pinned the bow on the hat and sank back in the chair, his hands clasped ecstatically. Into his face came an expression of rapture, of triumph. He sighed an "Ah!" of satisfaction, the sigh of a creator.

Sarah closed the door softly and turned to us with awe in her milliner's eyes, and fond respect.

"I *told* you he was a genius!" she said exultingly.

BLOODROOT

By Bliss Carman

WHEN April winds arrive
And the soft rains are here,
Some morning by the roadside
These gipsy folk appear.

We never see their coming,
However sharp our eyes;
Each year as if by magic
They take us by surprise.

Along the ragged woodside
And by the green spring run,
Their small white heads are nodding
And twinkling in the sun.

They crowd across the meadow
In innocence and mirth,
As if there were no sorrow
In all the lovely earth.

So frail, so unregarded;
And yet about them clings
That exquisite perfection,
The soul of common things!

Think you the springing pastures
Their starry vigil kept,
To hear along the midnight
Some message, while we slept?

How else should spring requicken
Such glory in the sod?
I guess that trail of beauty
Is where the angel trod.



A WOMAN never cares how good a man is if he will only pretend to be bad.

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

ART AND MARRIAGE

SHOULD artists marry? An old, old question! A problem crackling at the knees, hoary-visaged and with arteriosclerosis—a problem bent with senility, buffeted by a thousand speculations, the victim of a thousand lofty and eloquent philosophers. But, like most human problems, it has remained unsolvable. The artist and marriage continue to meet upon the hymeneal mat in mortal fray. To enumerate the professor-doctors, the psychologists and the philosophers who have wrestled with this question would be to fill a voluminous book with fine type. But have we come nearer to a solution? Has the artist, on the brink of the precipice which overhangs domesticity, paused and considered these words of wisdom?

Alas, no! The great geysers of erudition which have touched upon the subject of artists marrying have never been heeded by the makers of rhymes, the composer of tone poems or the amasser of paints. He has gone his way, secure in his own foolhardiness. Whenever the soft arms of love went snaking round his neck and the verbal syrups of amour went trickling into his ear, he succumbed to the demands of society. The Nietzsches, the Schopenhauers and the Havelock Ellises may come and go, but the problem is one of ever-recurring decimal points.

The very futility of the discussion will keep it alive. Only recently the eminent and recondite Huneker reopened the debate—strangely enough, taking the positive stand. The debate, however, is constantly on the market.

The virtuous matron, whose artistic boundaries are James Lane Allen and Mrs. Humphry Ward on the one side, and the Barbizon School on the other, is opposed to artistic conjugality for purely sentimental reasons. She senses unhappiness for the wife, and so deplures the contraction of an artist's marriage. Again the minnows—those tenth-rate followers and imitators of the great—are opposed to artists marrying on purely egotistical grounds. They explain that an artist is above all such petty conventions, that it is his duty to fillip his finger in the face of all mundane restrictions, that he is the archangel, the Zarathustra, the Mahomet, the eternal entity, the cosmic spark. These pseudo-artists would use their art as an excuse for debauchery; they justify their puny and ex-nuptial amours on the grounds of "temperament"—a word to which they attach an esoteric significance.

Then we have the opinions of scientists and psychopathologists—Edward Reibmayer, Wilhelm Ostwald, Max Nordau and von Krafft-Ebing. These lovers of the test tube and the clinic would reduce genius to chemistry. They would apply such things as biology, eugenics, psychiatry and geography to the question of artists marrying. Needless to say, they are divided on the subject. Still again there are the platitudinarians, the wind musicians, the wooers with suave words and smooth phrases. These cherubim will tell you that the passionate devotion of wives is an auxiliary to art, that until the love of the woman enters into the heart of the artist he is but a manikin, a mechanic, a specious technician, a dealer in ice, a creator into whom the human juices have never flowed.

Thus the jehad continues. Thus the swishing and sougling of words make loud the morning air. Thus the Sanhedrin is turned into an amateur debating society. Thus the fur flies. Thus the serpents hiss.

Obviously the question must be approached from a different angle. We must first inquire into that state of divinity or insanity, or whatever you choose to consider it, which some forgotten nomenclaturist has called the "artistic temperament." And then it might be well to take a casual look at the institution of marriage as it is practised today.

One thing at a time. We have had a thousand definitions of genius—a word more or less synonymous with "temperament." But with few exceptions these definitions have taken the artist too seriously. They have attributed to him transcendental virtues which he does not possess. They have implied that the artist is possessed of a psychic importance which evidence fails to corroborate. These definitions have divided the world into two classes—artists and non-artists; and they have assumed that the artist, in some obscure fashion, is superior to the non-artist. A category has been created into which all daubers, fiddlers and poetasters have been corralled. It has been the prevailing superstition throughout the ages that the artist is born and not made. Only recently have we begun to suspect that the artist is a human being, amenable to natural laws and solvable by the same formulas that apply to bricklayers, barbers and wire-tappers.

There was a time when the artist moved exclusively in his own circle. Now only the camp followers, the roustabouts and the hangers-on of art congregate in "communities" or *quartiers* and eat at those "little old" *table d'hôte* restaurants with those Hungarian orchestras. But with such red wine circuiters the world has small concern. Art is largely the result of hard work, of sedulous study, of assiduous application to the details of the craft. To be sure, one may be born

with certain musical, literary or color potentialities. But it is the perfecting of these talents which makes for art; and the greater the capacity of the man to develop his talents the greater the artist. Art is ninety per cent perspiration. The superstition that a congenital artist can seize a brush and a palette full of pigments, and, for the first time, create a picture, is as untenable as the theory that any man with a bent for mathematics can build a suspension bridge. It is true, of course, that the artist requires certain conditions for the development of his art different from the conditions necessary for the development of the bridge builder. Herein lies the line of demarcation between the artist and the artisan. Herein we find an explanation for the so-called "artistic temperament."

This brings us to the question of marriage, another threadbare topic, another blanched and withered bone of contention. But we will not go into the psychology of it. Our concern is merely with its externals—principally with its respectability. Respectability today is the chief concern of the human race, and marriage is the matrix of respectability. Respectability is an attempt to reduce all life to a simple conventional formula. It merges the contrasts of life. It is an antidote to romance, for it limits one's activities in nearly every line of human endeavor. It requires us to read certain books, to see certain plays, to dress after the prevailing fashion, to avoid certain topics of conversation. It forces upon us engraved cards and frock coats, the novels of William Dean Howells and the portraits of Sargent. It turns our minds from the important things of life to the creases in our trousers and the wings of our collars. It focuses the brains of the nation on unimportant details of philology. It limits a man to one wife, and raises his barber to a dizzy pinnacle of importance. Should the barbers go on strike tomorrow, in a week's time we should lose much of our respectability; our hair would not be cut nor our whiskers trimmed.

Now what chance is there for an artist

to develop his imagination under such restricting influences? How can he depict the great emotions of the world when his own principal passion is the cut of his clothes? And does not your true artist, once he has entered the nuptial meadows, realize the state of affairs and attempt to break away? Perhaps he has not figured out the matter consciously—few artists are logicians. But he senses a need for new environment, for new stimulation and intoxications; and with that realization begins "incompatibility" and domestic infelicity. This is why the artist balks at marriage. This is why the artist's wife throws up her hands in despair and writes her memoirs. And this is why I hold that the artist should *not* marry.

In the old racy days when artists were dissolute; when they wore their hair long and bedecked themselves in fantastic clothes; when they drank as their thirst dictated; when they came and went with their moods; when they enjoyed fighting and knew the ecstasy of stolen kisses; when each day was a new conquest full of new colors, new women and new debaucheries; when the artists' dreams took on the color of their lives, and, bound by no fetich, they said what they chose in the manner they chose—then the world had its Villons, its Verlaines, its Shakespeares, its Poes and its Christopher Marlowes. Can one imagine Villon writing his "*Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis*" one moment, and the next moment inspecting the grocer's bills, listening to his wife trucking with hucksters and discussing inanities with the neighbors?

All of which is ancient argument. But I am not dealing merely in theories, nor am I defending the loose and untrammelled life. Far from it! I am merely trying to show you that the artist is fundamentally an artisan, who, for his development, needs certain things which marriage does not permit. Had the same artist perhaps gone into some other line of endeavor he might have settled down and made an ideal husband. Temperament is very much the same the world over. When the plumber becomes infuriated and hurls his wife about, the

world attributes it to a vulgar and primitive passion; but when the artist indulges in a domestic foray it is called "temperament." The scientist and bartender, the artist and the manicurist, are more similar than we suspect; but the composition of a sonata requires certain intellectual capacities which the polishing of fingernails does not require, and it is in the acquisition of education that the artist differs from his fellow men. Let us drop our superstition regarding the artistic temperament. Let us not attribute domestic incompatibility to the mental characteristics of the artist. Let us realize instead that the artistic temperament is largely a revolt against the restrictions which the world has placed in the way of the artist's self-development.

Perhaps my theory against artists marrying is not convincing. No mere theory is. All questions are debatable. Therefore, let us for the moment look back over the lives of the great artists. In them we find many interesting and troublous activities. We find also that the artist has failed to demonstrate his ability to be a desirable husband. There have been but few recorded happy marriages among artist folk—and even these are open to suspicion. For is it not true that many domestic tragedies are never brought to light? Does all marital friction become a matter of record? Does the unhappy married pair always air its grievances in public? I doubt it. And therefore I hold that the so-called happy marriages of a few artists does not prove that marriage is desirable for the creative genius. I believe it is a colorable contention that if the majority of artists who marry are unhappy my case is won. Furthermore, I shall introduce as evidence the bachelors who have been artists. For if they do not prove specifically that marriage is impossible for the artist, they at least prove that marriage is not necessary to the artist. And by proving this we eliminate the sentimentalist from the discussion.

First: What of the artists who never married? What of the geniuses who chose the solitary life? They form a

mighty tribe, and their art works are among the greatest in existence. Behold a few:

Michael Angelo and Raphael were painter celibates. Walter Pater avoided women and wrote like one. Alfred de Musset contented himself with George Sand and *le poison vert*. Charles Lamb devoted himself exclusively to the companionship of his sister. Stendhal, anarchist and iconoclast, omitted marriage from his scheme of things. Flaubert was a kind old gentleman who remained single and advised young writers to be ascetic. (He was no saint, however.) Mérimée let a week end *esquipped* with George Sand—ever-recurrent lady!—suffice for all time. Keats died before he really had an opportunity to reveal his ideas on the subject, but nevertheless he left us much fine art. Swinburne kept bachelor's hall with Watts-Dunton. (Maybe "Poems and Ballads" frightened women away.) Pascal never indulged legally; nor did the symbolist, Villiers de l'Isle Adam. George Moore turned Doris over to Albert after three days at Orelay. (Nor was she the only one.) Old Rabelais escaped bondage; and the green-haired Baudelaire plucked only the flowers of evil. The brothers Goncourt who, according to Nietzsche, were Ajaxes struggling with Homer while the band played Offenbach, would have naught to do with women. Huysmans despised the female sex. Degas was too eccentric; and Monticelli was never lured to the domestic life. Then there were Walt Whitman, Richardson, Gray, Chatterton, Goldsmith, Cowper, James Thomson, and "B. V.," who managed to create art without the co-operation of wives.

These are not all. Ernest Dowson drank hasheesh and flirted with the tavern keeper's daughter. Heredia was never a benedict, and his "Trophies" are among the most perfect poems in French literature. Lionel Johnson never led a lady to the altar. 'Twas well he didn't: to have one's husband always drunk would not inspire marital happiness. Cold and hungry Francis Thompson staggering along the Strand would have made a sorry spouse (and the

world has yet to awaken to the magic of his art). Chénier, guillotined at thirty-one, was a fast young rake, who had no time to wait for legal formalities. Then there were those grand old celibates, Leonardo and Fra Angelico. And can one picture Villon married? Swift never married, but nevertheless wrote his "Journal to Stella"—a thing which made the lovelorn Vanessa furious. The discreet Congreve was a flagrant transgressor, exercising but little discrimination as to where he poured his love. Actresses, shopkeepers' wives and court ladies were the objects of his affection. At one time he loved Mrs. Bracegirdle, but he left his property to Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough.

Pope, the erratic invalid, kept his affairs on a platonic basis; but the sophisticated ferret has read between the lines in his letters to the Blount sisters. Giorgione—one of the world's seven greatest artists—died at twenty-three without contracting marriage; but he nevertheless left behind him a reputation as a great lover. Béranger had Judith Frère to console him during his last days. Hölderlin had a wild emotional time with Susette Gonthard, a married woman who proved both his inspiration and his ruin. After her death he went insane. And those artist-historians, Macaulay, Buckle, Gibbon, were bachelors. So were Kant, Spinoza, Adam Smith, Herbert Spencer, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. But here we get into philosophy. Then there are those unmarried poets, James Whitcomb Riley and George Sylvester Viereck. Sir Arthur Sullivan never married, but he left his money to a married woman. Clyde Fitch and George Ade—bachelor dramatists. And Bliss Carman, another great bachelor poet. And Robert Herrick.

What of the bachelor musicians? Chopin, lover of lace, drank deep of Madame Sand—and let it go at that. Liszt, indiscreet philanderer, lived with eight different ladies and had three children by a countess. Handel remained a bachelor to the end of his days. Three times he came near harnessing: first at Lübeck, where he went to fill the post of organist, which held the stipula-

tion that the newcomer should marry the old organist's daughter. Handel was then eighteen, and, the lady being thirty-four, the young musician hastily went back to Hamburg. His second close call was with an Italian woman to whom he became engaged. Why he did not marry her is a mystery. His third adventure was an Englishwoman, but she demanded that he give up his calling, at which he rightly enough balked. Beethoven never married; and it is well he did not. He had the temper of a Berserker and a habit of throwing soup in the cook's face. He had a love affair with the Countess Guiccardi, to whom, as all know, he dedicated his so-called "Moonlight" sonata; but the Countess married Count Gallenberg. It is not shown that Beethoven's love of Giulietta affected his music. Schubert—that great master of the *lied*—was an impecunious bachelor. The nearest he ever came to contracting a passion for the fair sex was when he fell in love with Caroline Esterhazy. But Caroline made little impression on him. Mendelssohn was a benedict of a highly respectable order—and his music showed it. Gounod, of a deeply religious nature, was at one time on the verge of entering the monastic life. Brahms admitted that he could no more marry than he could write an opera. Several women did their best to snare him, but without success. He said he hated the thought of women around pouring out their emotions upon him.

And the lady bachelors! Ellen Key and Selma Lagerlöf are both old maids. To say nothing of the perfervid Marie Corelli. And Lizette Woodworth Reese, perhaps America's finest lyricist, has never fallen victim to masculine charms.

Let us pass by the bachelors for the present: there are many more, but surely enough great art has been created by the foregoing to disprove the contention that a wife is the chief accessory to the man of genius. We will go on into muddier waters. We will glance quickly over a few of the artists who attempted matrimony and failed. There is a longer list of these unhappy people than of the bachelors. Let us look at a few of them:

Balzac escaped bachelordom by only five months—what an experience he had! It is well known that the Carlyles raised domestic hell. Dyspepsia, you will argue. Well, what of it? The peevish Bulwer-Lytton accidentally left the teacups in his studio unwashed (housewives be warned!) and divorce followed. In considering Chateaubriand can we overlook the beneficent influence of Madame Récamier? Shakespeare at eighteen was seduced and married by a woman of twenty-six, and there was a ruction. Milton tried matrimony three times and ended up by writing a pamphlet favoring divorce. Dryden made a failure of marriage. Burns paid his mistress for her services by marrying her, but went astray with others. Southey married, and his victim lost her reason; in his dotage he married again and went crazy himself. Coleridge married, but preferred his opium, and he and his spouse lived apart. Shelley drove one woman to suicide, and, after living with Mary Wollstonecraft for years, made tardy amends to society by legalizing the union. Wilde married, but his nature was not matrimonial, and we have no record that he was glad of the union. Leigh Hunt didn't make a success of wiving. Nor did Landor.

Rossetti tried it two years and failed—his wife took laudanum and he took chloral. Edward Fitzgerald separated from his wife. De Quincey muddled things—a hophead is not a pleasant companion. Hazlitt braved matrimony twice without any luck—his first wife divorced him and his second deserted him. Alfred de Vigny leaped into bondage with Miss Bunbury, but the memory of Miss Dorval spoiled the enterprise. Ruskin's marriage (forgive the inclusion!) was annulled, and Millais was made the beneficiary. Poe married a child, but no woman on earth could have satisfied that amorphous soul. Henley, late in life, also married a child and dedicated a book to her; but he was an idealist and his case hardly counts. Goethe made passionate love to any lady who would listen to him, smashed a hundred hearts and ended up by marrying a housekeeper. Verlaine was

divorced and shocked even Niñon by bringing his mistresses to her famous *table d'hôte*. De Maupassant headed for the rocks and smashed. It is said that crazy Blake was happily married, but we understand that in his Garden of Eden he wished to introduce a second Eve. Eve No. 1 objected. Addison was mis-mated.

Byron's wife left him (sensible woman!) and the artist (sensible man!) made a good poem out of it: his amours defy tabulation. Dumas was temperamentally unfit for double harness. Strindberg was a congenital misogynist, and the account of his divorces and affairs with women are racy of the soil. D'Annunzio once had his Duse—but no more! Turner was a rake and a lush and painted sunsets that tickled Ruskin. Maeterlinck (rumor has it) alternates his time between his domestic castle and the wild abandonment of city life—Georgette Leblanc is a rare and wise woman! But what if he had married the usual sort? Corneille constantly fought with his wife. The dissolute Racine led his other half a sore and baneful existence. The capricious La Fontaine (secretly tied) separated from his wife at a tender age. Marot used to beat Madame Marot over the head with long, hard loaves of bread. Ron-sard's decadent theories caused his wife much mental anguish. Becquer, called the Spanish Poe, went sadly amiss when he married Carta Esteban y Navarro. So glad was she to get away that she did not stop to take the children.

And let us not forget George Henry Lewes and George Eliot. (She held him in such rein that he never addressed her as George, but always as Mr. Eliot!) Ibsen was happily married perhaps, but when he was sixty he fell in love with a girl of sixteen—see "The Master Builder." William J. Locke was lately co-respondent in a divorce case and married the respondent. Zola, to be sure, was married, but had a child by another woman, and his wife winked at it. Mrs. Eddy was married three times: her first husband died of yellow fever in North Carolina, and even after she had millions, it remained for strangers to

mark the grave. Tolstoi often left his wife, unable to stand domesticity. His "Kreutzer Sonata" is a furious indictment of marriage. Gobineau lived away from his wife for long periods. Henri Becque was unhappily married. Arthur Symons wrote passionately of London and Vienna nights and went mad. His wife—admirable woman—is now busy supporting him.

One midnight, so we are told, Molière, in artistic desperation, threw his wife out of the window. She never returned. Tasso used his better half as a target for bric-à-brac. Del Sarto drew unhappiness in the marital lottery. Renan indulged in marriage, but only by a superhuman effort did he keep it smooth. Gorky was run out of America for unconventional conduct. Mendes also made no end of trouble. A short time ago J. M. Barrie dragged his marital affairs into court. Gerhart Hauptmann, the greatest of all modern dramatists, won a Nobel prize despite the fact that he separated from his first wife. La Rochefoucauld married Andrée de Vivonne at fifteen, but later fell under the amorous gaze of Madame de Chevreuse, through which lady he became attached to Anne of Austria. And old Rousseau! He had an "affair" with Madame de Warrens and became her domestic. Toward the end of his life he married his mistress, Thérèse le Vasseur, a servant at an inn. Although Montaigne married, he had no affection for his wife, which may have accounted for the fact that they lived on excellent terms together. Titian had his Cécilia (last name unknown) and married her, so far as we can learn, only in order to legitimize their child. Landor married, but constant bickerings ended in a complete separation of the pair.

Lamartine married, to be sure, but the one passion of his life was for Julie Bouchard Charles, a motherly matron many years his senior, whose desire was to dominate young poets maternally rather than amorously. Hugo and Adèle, formally married, lived happily for eleven years; but then Juliette Drouet, serpent, put in an appearance while he was producing "Lucretia Borgia," and

the Hugo household was thenceforth run *à trois*. This was but a beginning. M. Billard caught Hugo with Madame Billard, and Hugo narrowly escaped arrest. Madame Hugo for the second time demonstrated her liberality by receiving the woman in her home. Were all wives like Madame Hugo I might advise marriage for artists! Sterne was unhappy in marital domesticity. It was Miss Fourmantel, and not Elizabeth Lumley, who served as a model for Maria in "The Sentimental Journey." And rumors also connect Sterne's name with Lady Percy and Mrs. Draper. The unhappy married life of Dickens is known to all lovers of the sentimental. Heine married a Frenchwoman, but Teutons and Latins do not mix well, and his marriage, though comparatively happy, was full of passing storms. Velasquez married, but when we look over the record of his *affaires de cœur* we regret it—as no doubt he did.

Let us turn for a minute and pry into the domestic affairs of the great composers. Their lives were indeed a sorry mess. Berlioz was an impetuous and fickle Don Juan who loved any number of women. After an unfortunate affair with a great Parisian beauty, he fell in love with an Irish actress who played Shakespeare. After a merry chase he got her consent, but their married life was a failure. When he could endure it no longer, Berlioz separated from her. Meyerbeer married his cousin, and many of their domestic squabbles have become public property. The most famous one of them was patched up indirectly by Chopin. (It is not a matter of record who patched up the others.) Tschai-kowsky was supported for fifteen years by a woman admirer whom he had never seen, but that did not interfere with his amour with an impecunious Russian girl who declared her love for him and demanded that he marry her, claiming that he had deceived her for many years. He attempted to protest; but it did no good. He became a husband. For thirty-seven years he had harbored an antipathy to marriage. His was a frightful affair. He lived with his wife two days and then tried to commit

suicide. Later he fled to St. Petersburg. He was supposed to have died of cholera, but rumor has it otherwise.

Haydn, after several love affairs—including an amour with a young countess—married one of his pupils, Anna Maria Keller, the daughter of a wigmaker. Shortly after he separated from her, and these two lived apart for thirty years. Then he fell in love with a married Italian songbird, but nothing came of the flirtation. The Liszt-Wagner scandal is rare and racy, and is enough to discourage any harmonist from conjugality. One of Liszt's illegitimate children, Cosima, married Hans von Bülow. While she was still married to Von Bülow she went to live with Wagner who, at that time, was married to Mina Planer. They had a son, Siegfried, born some time before Cosima got her divorce from Von Bülow. Meanwhile Wagner's wife died, and he and Cosima were married. In celebration of the birth of their son Wagner wrote the Siegfried Idyll—a pure and lovely thing. (I have not even mentioned Wagner's source of inspiration for Tristan—Madame Wasendonck.) Bach married twice and had twenty children. Construe this argument as you choose.

Mozart fell in love with one of his pupils—a girl of fifteen. But she turned him down for an actor at a Munich theater; and finally he ended by marrying Aloysia's sister, Constance, who kept house in so slovenly a manner that the composer of the Eb-major Symphony was obliged to dance indoors in winter to keep warm. Leschetizky, the teacher of Paderewski, contracted the habit of marrying his prominent pupils. There have been five of them. Eugène d'Albert has run him a close second; he has married three or four times. Mascagni has had trouble with his wife. Donizetti—a Scotchman whose real name was Izett—married an Italian lady and changed his name to Donizetti. Shortly after he became melancholy, lapsed into dementia and died of paralysis. Gluck married and then drank himself to death.

There you are. I have nothing more to say. And I reiterate it makes not

a particle of difference. Artists have always married, fumed, fretted, rip-sorted, fought and created disturbances generally. And no doubt they always will. The case is dead against them, but they care not a whit. The artist beholds the present; the future is to him—the future. It is this concentration on the

present that makes for art—and for unhappiness. Artists should be amateurs of women. But when the emotions begin to focus, he owes it to his art—to say nothing of the woman—to seek sensations elsewhere.

Forty women are a delusion: one woman is a snare.



THE POLICE GAZETTE

By Arthur Davison Ficke

WHERE drab along the thundering city streets
 Straggles the crowd in somber dress and mean,
 In a shop window often have I seen
 Some tiptoe form whose lure each passer greets—
 Some silk-limbed girl whose smile our frowning meets—
 Some little half-clad comic opera queen
 As whitely shimmering as the Cytherene,
 A playful goddess of the printed sheets.

Strange light—that from this tinselled form pours gold
 To follow me six footsteps on my way.
 Strange ugly passers—whom this hussy bold
 Lures with dull lust or chills with dull dismay.
 Strange world—that has denied the gods of old
 Who thus steal back amongst us in this day.



THE LAST REVEL

By Arthur Wallace Peach

THE drifting gold of Autumn floods the hills,
 And every brook is fringed with creeping fires,
 Like some vast, golden urn, each vale distills
 A purple incense—smoke of hidden pyres.

In scarlet robes the woods are bright arrayed,
 And winds that haste from mountains dim and sheer
 Have called the spirits of each glen and glade
 To join the last wild revel of the year!

"CLASS"

A Page from the Book of Broadway

By George Bronson-Howard

Kipling has said that the Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under their skin, and Shaw in his latest play has endeavored to prove this. Mr. Howard here writes a somewhat startling story on the same theme. "Class" is the best of the "Pages from the Book of Broadway," and presents a point of view which is of vital social interest. Do you agree with Kipling and Shaw that there is no class distinction? Do you agree with Mr. Howard?

IF it is true that a Frenchman's tune, "The Marseillaise," gave France equality, then let that unknown negro "professor" who wrote the first turkey trot step forward and share his honors, for he has destroyed the last American social barrier. His should be the National Anthem instead of an out-of-date Teutonic tune, whose lyric contains not one single reference to the turkey trot and the grizzly bear. Has this anachronism brought "The" Avenue and Avenue A to the practices of blood brothers? We wot not. Away with it. Let us have something more typical of a nation whose pride is speed. Drop overboard art, education and breeding on the way: the man ahead hasn't got them; only those lunatics who tarry to admire sunsets and scenery, who linger at libraries and stop at picture galleries; some of whom, crowning idiocy of all, actually pause to wonder where they are going and whether they will like it when they get there.

With such half-witted persons as these we have, naturally, no concern—are we not a patriotic American? Let us, rather, consider the case of Rosa Riley, who, thanks to the turkey trot, stepped up from the Bowery onto Fifth Avenue and, hampered with none of those idiotic impediments, found herself very much at home there.

I

In the world of vaudeville and musical shows, there is a type of man whose

success depends almost entirely upon his partner. He can dance every known step, can learn in a jiffy any new one, can speak lines without embarrassment, can even sing in an acceptable sort of way. But alone he never wins renown—lacking as he does that golden, gracious thing that, for want of its better understanding, is "personality."

But given a partner with this gift, the team leaps into sudden prominence; these men have a most amazing ability for bringing out the best in others. Knowing their own efforts to be uninteresting, they subordinate them in such a way as to heighten their partners'. Theirs the questions, the partners the amusing answers. Theirs the laborious part of the dancing, saving their partners' breath for clever athletic tricks. Theirs the melody, showy trills and cadenzas for the partners. . . . Moreover, they are excellent business men and know how to get the best positions on the bill, the best booking, the most advertising for the money. . . . But lacking the partner, they languish.

Such was Dave Dunkerley, his habitat a certain Bon Ton Music Hall on the lower East Side. Here he played the piano for the moving pictures, did an eccentric song-and-dance turn to his own accompaniment on the banjo, played the principal part in the "after pieces"—tabloid burlesques put on at

holiday times. These he also wrote—rather rewrote from the memory of many; selected tunes, rehearsed and staged them.

And each night, instead of prayers, he delivered himself of anathemas directed at the head of his former partner, Ed. E. McCue. Him he had found a drunken medicine show shouter, had taught him to dance, had "staked" him to "new scenery"—his clothes being in collapse; with him had then "doubled up," playing Northwestern low-priced vaudeville. Then, by dint of patience, cunning and foresight, he had managed to get booking that brought them as close to Broadway as the Bronx; persuading a powerful agent to make a journey to their "picture house."

But, unfortunately, the agent had come in a motor car belonging to one who had an interest in a firm that produced musical shows. This person had been so captivated by Ed. E. McCue's laughter-provoking performance that, next day, while the agent was making out a five-year contract with the team, McCue was summoned by Mandelbaum to prove his comic abilities. Which he did, and accordingly "signed" as second comedian in a production soon to see Broadway. Comedians are scarce there as they are everywhere else. . . .

McCue had spared Dunkerley the oral details of this arrangement, slipping off to Syracuse and the show, leaving behind only a querulous note. It then became needless for the agent to tell the deserted one that the contract was principally because of the deserter; who, rechristened "Ned McHugh," scored a Broadway hit with the very patter, songs and dances that Dunkerley had carefully arranged, better to bring out McCue's gifts of the gods, busy day and night while McCue was a "jolly good fellow" or was sleeping off the effects of being one. McCue was like any number of brainless clowns who never achieve anything beyond a barroom celebrity, unless an author is moved to write a part that exactly fits their eccentricities and a stage director coaches them until they reproduce it like a phonograph record. Dunkerley had been

both author and director. Broadway has seen shoals of such celebrities; they remain to borrow its dollars and half-dollars on the strength of their "one part" fame.

Dunkerley grimly determined when he met such another that he would guard himself against any repetition of such a catastrophe. He had no doubt of meeting one: he knew that, everywhere, in the most unlikely places, there was plenty of talent of the "personality" sort; and that it was usually unaware of its own value and almost always incapable or undesirous of marketing it. Meanwhile we find him at the Bon Ton Theater, living on next to nothing, willing to do any extra work that would add to the small stock of dollars he was putting away toward the "act" that, as soon as he found his "partner," would take him on the "big time" he had so narrowly missed. There was always a small standing "ad" in the cheaper professional papers that "performers" were "wanted" at the Bon Ton Music Hall; whither they came, amateurs and seedy professionals, were tried and found wanting.

Also he visited other places like the Bon Ton, ever on the alert for "personality." . . . He was to find it at a time and in a place where he had no reason to expect it—nor was she the sort of partner he had been seeking. She was, in fact, Rosa Riley.

II

It had been snowing all day, fitfully, gustily. The snow god in charge had been dozing, and the few flakes that managed to fall had slipped through his fingers. But, that night, Rosa Riley's fairy godmother sent to tickle his feet and freeze his whiskers her friend and ally the North Wind; and, that he might not turn into an ice god, he gave chase, flinging his darts wildly. . . . Which is all very well for gods: it keeps them healthy and prevents their taking on weight. But our little earth beneath them, their football, checker, chess and domino board, undergoes inconvenient alterations thereby.

For instance, when Dunkerley emerged from his Bon Ton Theater, yawning for his Brooklyn boarding house, the car line south was snowbound, the Bowery a snowy highway of ice palaces until, far distant, a Gothic castle arose; a castle with snow ramparts innumerable, snow terraces, even an immense portcullis and drawbridge—where had been Park Row and the Brooklyn Bridge, the latter (though this Dunkerley could not see) a shining white spider web sprinkled with star dust.

None of this beauty appealed particularly to one who would have much preferred a warmly heated southbound car. He stood and cursed before plunging on downtown. But when one sinks several feet at every step walking is weary work; so, halfway and half frozen, observing he stood near a huge square door that bore a numeral standing for a notorious dance hall, he rang the bell, gave the warder at the gate assuery in the name of the owner of the Bon Ton—a ward politician; and stepped in for a warming drink of whiskey.

The name passed him down a long, dark hall and into the sudden glare of a long, low-ceilinged room. At his entrance—someone having just dropped a coin into the maw of an automatic piano—there was a blatant blare of ragtime, accompanied by the scraping of chairs and the rattling of glasses. Somewhat to Dunkerley's surprise, he noted they were dancing the latest Broadway craze.

New Yorkers are the narrowest people in the world, Broadway the most narrow-minded street. A vaudeville performer had seen this dance on San Francisco's Barbary Coast (so called no doubt because it holds so many pirates). She had brought it East, hailing it as new, and it was immediately copied by producers. Dunkerley had been thinking of putting it on at the Bon Ton—as a novelty!! And here it was already popular—that knee-locked, swaying, shuffling intimacy, that turkey trot to-dolo, Spanish-negro harmony. Most of these people were dancing it as well as those Broadway paid to see; many danced it better; one young tomboy in

a scarlet tam-o'-shanter and a short skirt did it so well that once his eyes fell upon her they remained there.

She had all the free, untrammelled grace of some lithe young animal of the wild; and, as it was a frankly animal dance, he watched her as he might have watched the great God Pan, had he come upon him unawares in his native woods.

It served with Dunkerley the purpose for which it was originally devised, stirring his sex instincts until his blood hummed and hammered at his ears. Most people, endeavoring to emphasize suggestive movements, made the dance vulgar and offensive. With her it was but the unconscious expression of instincts and desires otherwise stifled.

And as Dunkerley saw her face, with its small features and sullen, mutinous yet withal eminently kissable red mouth, noted her lithe and lissome, slender yet rounded boyish figure, and the surpassing grace and sinuousness of her movements, he realized, suddenly, that here was the long-looked-for partner. Better than the best comedian, this girl; who could, in the reek of an ugly room, suddenly make a tired man desire her fiercely. . . . She seemed to radiate color, breathe fresh air, air of Pan's forest, seemed to be dancing alone against the skyline. Her hair was as vividly black as her skin was white; and her heavy eyebrows and long lashes framed some sort of sea green eyes. Her skin seemed as soft as it was white and firm.

"Who is she?" he asked his waiter, a bored and nonchalant gallant in a "sporty" suit who sang between dances, and whom the question evidently touched on a sore spot. "That little chippy skirt?" he returned. "Look out for your souper while she's around—one of these yere chicken gun molls. . . . No, she ain't got no fellow. She bust a bottle over a good guy's nut onct—and he jest give her a little kiss! Them kind of frails ain't no good to themselves nur nobody else neither. . . . I'll introduce you to a *regular* girl." . . .

Which Dunkerley hastily declined; and at the conclusion of the dance, before Miss Riley could resume her seat,

approached her, card in hand, a professional card that read like a theatrical advertisement. At this she glanced carelessly; and, though she excused herself to her friend, and permitted Dunkerley to pay for her drink, she was uninterested in what he had to say. In vain he outlined incontrovertible facts. The turkey trot was as yet in its infancy along Broadway. Pioneers always garnered prizes. Being a dancer of unusual ability and having a vivid personality, with him to direct her it was impossible she should fail. He had the money appropriately to costume the act. He knew how to get them a hearing. . . . And so forth and so on. He was amazed at his lack of success in impressing her: she must be the worst sort of ambitionless dullard.

But, when she spoke, he saw this was not so. The girl's English was execrable: she converted principal diphthongs into broad "d's"; had an exceedingly limited vocabulary and mispronounced the simplest polysyllables. Of all this she seemed aware, and told him so. "Me? I'd be a fine-lookin' object uptown, I would!" she concluded scornfully. "Whadda I wanta go up agen people thatt'd give me the horse laff every time I open me trap? I'd be sore on meself all d' time, and sore on d' world, and wantin' to scrap wid everybody. I'd tryan talk right and I'd make nothin' but breaks. Not in mine, mister. I'm just right where I am. I ain't got a neducation, but I'm wise how to git by and live nice an' not work like a dog neither. So much obliged, but nothin' doin', an' thank you for the drink an' so long." . . .

Her words and her gesture were final. Dunkerley took himself off with something else to swear about besides the weather—returning on several occasions within the next week. On his third visit she flew into a rage: she would "bend somethin' over his beezer if he didn't let her alone." She'd told him no until now she was tired. . . .

It was nothing short of miraculous then that there appeared in the Bon Ton Music Hall less than a week later a chastened young miss who spoke so

softly that Dunkerley must several times request a repetition. Gone were scarlet tam-o'-shanter, violent checked skirt, tawdry blouse of imitation "baby Irish," huge bows of ribbon to her shoes, loud speech and rowdy gestures. She had not even interrupted his rehearsal with the film man—he was fitting musical accompaniments to the weekly change of reels; but sat huddled up in a back seat until Dunkerley discovered her. When he did, she said, in a very low, indistinct voice, that, were it possible his offer had been serious, she begged forgiveness for her ignorant, common behavior and would do whatever he suggested. Only she thought it fair she should be allowed to pay her part and would buy her own costumes; but she wished a "gentleman friend" of hers might accompany them at their selection as she strongly desired his (the gentleman friend's) approval. . . . It was then that Dunkerley noticed that she wore the most somber of clothes: plain white waist with coat, skirt, hat, gloves, shoes and stockings, all of black.

Dunkerley lowered his voice and adopted the manner generally used for inquiry as to death in the family. She giggled nervously. "I—I didn't know what else to g-get," she explained; then virtuously: "I hate loud clothes."

III

WHEN, a few days later, they went to order her costumes, Dunkerley's suspicions of her metamorphosis was confirmed by the sight of the "gentleman friend." There was something about this youth that Dunkerley vaguely identified as "class"—the sort of thinness that gives height and that glorifies clothes; a small mouth—and a weak one; and hair that lay so smooth on his small head and shining scalp that it looked as though it were painted there. . . . This person bestowed upon Miss Riley an almost beneficent patronage. He took an interest in that little girl, he told Dunkerley; he wanted to see her a ripping success. Rosa could hardly contain herself for pride. She referred to him as Mr.

Moncure, but sometimes, timidly, ventured on "Charlie."

Mr. Moncure took the affair of the costumes entirely into his own hands: he had a sister, he said, who was the best dressed little filly that ever was foaled, and the little filly knew what was what in clothes. He waved away all suggestions as to costume firms, and whirled them off in a taxi to an "atelier" where he began to bully a Frenchman in a silken waistcoat and tie to match, a person so gorgeous that Dunkerley addressed him as "sir." But to Mr. Moncure, he was less than a gum chewing shopgirl. This was conventional—that was cheap—those clashed—that was too much Montmartre.

"Look here, man, this girl's what you might call untutored—wild—a little savage." (He did not seem to mind Rosa in the least.) "Her costumes must suggest that. Fig leaves and tiger skins. Corking idea. Tiger skin: black and yellow—skin-tight effect—that's one costume. And the other. Think of her naked except from some sticky stuff and the leaves just falling and sticking to her! Autumn leaves. They've got her colors. All kinds of reds and yellows, particularly yellow — tawny yellow. These costumes ought to make you a bigger 'rep' than ever if you do 'em right. Not often you get a chance at a freak type like her—healthy young savage. . . . Never mind about the expense—you get the costumes *right*."

Outside, Dunkerley ventured to remonstrate. "We can't afford—" he began; but Moncure cut him short. "Anybody can afford the best," he said. "Now, for you—" He measured him with a critical eye. "By the bye, you must have your hair cut decently. I'll take you to my tailor for your dress clothes, and then we'll have your top hat and shoes made to order. You cut along, little girl—your part of it's done. 'Phone me later. I've often wanted to see a vaudeville team dressed *right*," he told Dunkerley as they left her. "They always look such *muckers*." . . .

Before the morning was over, Dunkerley found he had contracted to pay as much for a silk hat and a pair of pumps

as he had expected to pay for his clothes; the clothes came to almost as much as what he had figured would costume the act. Meeting Rosa for rehearsal, she seemed to expect him to share her awed admiration for this person who had plunged them into debt. "Isn't he *wonderful*?" she asked. And then, because she wanted to talk of her beloved, part of the story came out.

Moncure, on a drunken ramble, had stumbled into the dance hall a few nights before, had caught her around the waist and whirled her into the dance without so much as "by your leave." High words had followed with the very same waiter who had informed Dunkerley concerning Rosa; Moncure resenting his familiar address to her—the result a fight in which the hardy explorer was pulled down, deer and dogs, hurled out hurt and bleeding. He would have lost his watch and money, too, if she had not swiftly possessed herself of them before any other could do so; had then gone with him to bathe and bind up his hurts. . . . This was as much as she would tell Dunkerley. It was doubtful if she understood what had followed.

No man may win a woman utterly until he has been both her master and her child. Both instincts must be stirred, the ages-old primitive one that caused her to cower before the club of the caveman, the even older thrill of a baby at her breast. Until ye are as little children ye may not enter the Kingdom of Love. A man having convinced a woman of his strength, she pardons any weakness save cowardice. Pardons? Nay, welcomes. It is an emphasis of his need of her. And, as Moncure lay back on his sofa, very pale and white, he had caught her hand, feebly. Cold, it became burning hot, his also. As he opened his eyes, she had seen him through a mist; and when he drew down her lips, they were utterly his.

She had skipped the next morning, also, in telling Dunkerley. With Moncure, taking for granted that, having given herself at last, he was as much hers as she was his, she had spoken of other nights. But Moncure's had been only

a drunken passion and he wanted to be rid of her. He had found reasonable objections in her calling; for, that he might not underestimate the value of her devotion, she had begged him not to confuse her with the easy-virtued women of the dance hall: she was, if anything, rather vain of her dexterity as a pocket rifle.

But Moncure had looked grave, pointing out how impossible this made any further intimacy. If he could afford to support her . . . But he could not. It was better they separate before they grew to care too much for each other.

With her scanty vocabulary, even if she had made shift to tell this to Dunkerley, she could not have explained the effect upon her of the morning sunlight on Moncure's old mahogany, on the shining silver of the toilet table, on Gramercy Park just over the way. She shuddered at a picture of the police entering such a place in search of a thief—such a desecration was impossible. For the moment, she had been on the point of succumbing to fate. He was right. Since he could not support her, he could not ask her to cease stealing; and her lack of education made her unfit for any other occupation except that of a servant, or else the hardest kind of work in factories and sweatshops; and his apartment was equally no place for a girl with work-hardened hands and coarse clothes.

But she had looked at him and could not—there is something fiercely faithful about one who has kept herself so long for her first lover. . . . Then she had remembered Dunkerley's card, and, for her, the problem was solved.

IV

HAD her sharp little eyes been able to peer deep into the mind of Mr. Moncure, she would not have been so sure. All the time that young man had been in her company and that of Dunkerley's, he had suffered exquisite tortures. Suppose he should be seen by men of the club, or women of his calling list. For the thousandth time he cursed his

drunken passion. Not that the thought of her seduction gave him any qualms: that, to his mind, was the only redeeming feature of the adventure—to conquer a fortress that had been besieged so much and held so long; another confirmation of his celebrated charm. But self-esteem could be gratified at too high a cost: he must now rid himself of his *incubus*. He had never imagined that to "make herself worthy of him," she would even discard the gaudy clothes so dear to those of her type, much less abandon a congenial calling for hard work and study.

If she would only come to him now and then—but she wanted his companionship, his instruction, his assistance—as today, for instance. . . . Now Mr. Moncure's position in society was none too secure: with an income of less than twenty thousand a year and of no particularly prominent family (his father had been a cloth merchant in Philadelphia), he must know only the rightest kind of right people, else could never take the position he coveted. He wanted to lead cotillions and be the favorite of the fair, to be quoted for his witty sayings and good taste and otherwise to be a leading light familiar to all newspaper readers.

To achieve all this, he had come up to New York from his native town a few years earlier and had eaten through any quantity of humble pie into a good club. To be seen about with favorites of fortune, he willingly performed for them such services as rushing ahead to restaurants to engage tables, waiting at stage doors to make the acquaintance of the girls they desired to meet; otherwise played the courtier and sycophant, in return for which he was invited to week ends at country places and on yachting trips, where he met the sort of women he wished to know.

It is on such retainers that the brunt of amusement falls should the party become dull: they must know the latest laughs, the newest novelty, must be able to advise on frocks or design masquerade costumes, select wallpaper and draperies for a new room, hunt through the antique shops for period furniture, think

of striking oddities for Mrs. Van Susan's cotillion favors. And, particularly, they must be careful not to get into a scandal with the wrong people. A duke may walk arm in arm with a prizefighter or be seen publicly with a chorus girl; but for one of Mr. Moncure's sort either feat would be fatal. Leaders of society enjoy the sensation of holding in their hands the lives of their subjects. Like the Roman populace, they relish the knowledge that to destroy a life they have only to turn down their thumbs.

Hence Mr. Moncure was not present at the opening of the new act either out of town or in it.

V

To do him all justice, it cannot be denied that he played a large part in levitating Miss Riley. Aside from the genesis: that she would never have attempted to rise had she not met him; he had enabled the team to dress in an entirely different manner from any other team then performing; and moreover, had communicated two small secrets almost entirely confined to men of good clubs—the lack of which spoils the effect of the smartest dress clothes: teaching Dunkerley how to accomplish a smart dress necktie by tying only one end and concealing the other, showing him how much more effective is a silk hat when worn to show the forehead and cover the back of the head . . .

But his best bit of advice, that which was to assist Rosa so materially in her advance, was given for a selfish reason. He had not then had Billy Ransome's invitation to a Mediterranean yachting cruise, and wanted to protect himself should her introduction to any prowling men friends become unavoidable. An intrigue with a foreign artiste was usual enough to pass unremarked; whereas one with a child of the Bowery would be too good a story to keep and would eventually reach the wrong ears. A foreign accent would explain that regrettable tendency of Rosa's to delete diphthongs in favor of single consonants, would provide for otherwise fatal double negatives and any number of similar

solecisms. But *what* foreign accent? Not French: too many spoke it. Spanish was better. If only she were dancing Spanish dances!

It was then he remembered to have seen this very turkey trot danced to a sort of Spanish music. Paris—the Abbaye—the Tango Argentino—the very thing! He had hurried to suggest it to Dunkerley; who was sufficiently the good showman to be impressed.

"Tango Ar-gen-ti-no," he repeated, fascinated. "Some name! That's a *great* idea! I'll change the music right away—there's a lot of Spanish 'rags.' Can you give me an idea of the *tempo*?" And then as Moncure hummed: "I see—sort of a draggety rag. That slow stuff'll make it all the better for a whirlwind finish. Great—great stuff. . . . But I don't like that name you've got for *her*. Can't you think of another?" . . .

Eventually they settled on La Zoë: it was not quite Spanish, just right for an Argentine corruption, they thought. "Just the right kind of familiar sound, too," Dunkerley agreed triumphantly. "People'll think they've heard it before. It's something like somebody's—"

"La Loie?" Moncure smiled tolerantly.

"Sure," said Dunkerley, "La Lo-ey, La Zo-ey—there you are! The public never remembers much nearer than that after a few years."

Which proved to be correct. It tricked even the agent, who, on the strength of Dunkerley's former success in picking the now well known Ned McHugh, had secured for them a tryout in an obscure Jersey town. "La Zoey," he had muttered; "you'll have to change that, Bo. There's one knocking around somewhere already." And, then when Dunkerley had explained: "Good business," he laughed, very well pleased. Such impressions properly handled meant extra salary, and he was again to draw up a five-year contract and take ten percent. "Tell you what, though," he added: "tie a can to that Dunkerley part of it: La Zoey and Dunkerley don't fit. Play up the 'Zoey' big and black, and put a line under it: 'Assisted by M. Dunkerley'—"

M. meaning Monseer. That's what those classy foreign acts are doing. And, say, I hope you got an iron-bound contract with her: these dames are worse'n actors."

"Say," returned Dunkerley scornfully, "she couldn't take an engagement in Heaven without me. She can't even get married and retire. She's got to go right on dancing even if she married Rockefeller—unless her husband buys me off. If she quits me, I can sic the law on her and take away every nickel she's got. I paid a lawyer twenty-five to draw up that contract; and an eel couldn't squirm out of it."

"Too bad you didn't think of that with Ned McHugh," commented the agent. "He's gone over to Abrahams at three hundred and fifty dollars."

Dunkerley shook his head. "I'm going to put him in my prayers," he replied. "This girl's worth a dozen of Ed. E. McCue. Watch our smoke—you'll see."

VI

MR. FIGBAUM did see, very much to his profit. To him must be granted some of the credit due La Zoë's success; for, before bringing them to New York, he had the foresight to have the act booked through a series of minor towns; where Miss Riley lost her nervousness at the sight of audiences; where Dunkerley, good showman that he was, "speeded it up" until the entire twenty minutes seemed a series of whirls and gyrations so varied as to give audiences no time to grow weary.

The number of "calls" increased night by night. Closing night on the road, he was compelled to make a speech for her, in which she deplored her lack of English to respond adequately to their gratifying appreciation. It was wonderful for one who had been so great a favorite on her native heath to meet with similar affection among strangers—but she would not call them strangers *now*: hereafter this would be a second home to her. . . . The agent, out in front, decided this to be a master stroke; "keep it in." On their New York opening, he

would have a band of iron-handed ushers insist upon a speech. It was good for an extra paragraph in all the papers.

As it turned out, however, the ushers were not needed. New York audiences always applaud a foreign artiste on principle. Even though bored with the act, they fear they have missed some subtle merit a lack of appreciation of which will loudly proclaim their ignorance. And when actually pleased, the thought that their taste is up to the standard of more artistic countries is so gratifying that their applause is thunderous.

And, that a male dancer might look like a gentleman: that he and his female partner might perform difficult gyrations dressed as though for the Opera, that they danced to ragtime music—hitherto associated only with buck and wing and cakewalk teams, music that the audience could whistle and understand: these were anomalies. Add to this the effect of "class" produced by a pair of monogrammed velvet curtains drawn aside by a footman in black plush livery, powdered wig, white silk stockings and buckled shoes, disclosing a stage draped *à la Reinhardt* with the softest of colorless hangings which the calcium caused to assume a bewildering succession of colors—and you will have some idea of the novelty of La Zoë's effect upon people generally unused to artistic effort.

In the center of it all bloomed the South American Tiger Lily—as the advertisements read—the lithe young savage who danced first the "Tiger Tango" in her "creation" of black and yellow, second the "Forest Tango" in her "falling leaves" costume and in a rain of rainbow light from the calcium, an autumn rainbow of dusky reds and dim yellows. Her final appearance, in a blaze of whites and ambers, was in a Pierrette's blouse of yellow, with black dots, tights to her waist, one silk-stockinged leg yellow, one black, each adorned with a jeweled garter, in one of which was thrust a gleaming cross-hilted dagger; and they closed the act with an Apache turkey trot. There was little breath left in Dunkerley to make his speech.

VII

EVEN when a writer confines himself strictly to history, there are dissatisfied carping incompetents who complain that stories of the stage are not gloomy enough: the heroine always achieves success—"so different from real life." . . . A deceiving half-truth this, worse than a lie. Most of the people worth writing about *do* achieve success, their kind of success, artistic, financial—rarely both, 'tis true. Every week the serious journals or the penny press promote from obscurity some new aspirant. Many with names unfamiliar to the public succeed in winning the praise of certain circles—the only kind they covet. People of genius, talent or striking personalities seldom remain unknown for long. *Au contraire*, many achieve renown who have only brazen effrontery or good luck.

To write of failures is to write dull stuff. Only their self-conceit warrants their bad humor with a world that will have none of them. History is the record of the unusual: had none of us been above the average, we would still be living in trees. The monkeys have the only perfect democracy.

As for success on the stage, that is the easiest of all. We would rather that you engaged in conversation the average theatrical celebrity than that we paused to prove this. Squaring the square, pointing the pyramid or rounding the circle is work for sapient dullards such as, say, professors of dramatic literature. We ourselves have Rosa Riley's history to complete—and are at a critical moment in her career.

In the midst of her first night success, she was silent, sullen, obdurate. Dunkerley with difficulty kept from her dressing room other agents, representatives of booking offices and theatrical firms, reporters for the professional publications; telling tales of overstrained temperament, shattered nerves, syncope, a physician in attendance. His agent took charge of the business men; Dunkerley satisfied the reporters—it being a well known fact that in the average theatrical journal any story is true if backed up by sufficient paid advertising.

Rid of everyone but the agent, Dunkerley requested La Zoë be left to him. "Don't worry about it," he said composedly, referring to a recent exhibition of wrath on her part. "If I'd had St. Peter harnessed up the way I've got Riley, there'd be no Catholic religion." The agent went, relieved of worry: any extended acquaintance with Dunkerley gave people considerable reliance on his word.

He had locked Rosa's dressing room door in case she should be dressed before him. When she began to pound on it, he joined her, ready for the street. Disregarding her angry protests, he forced himself into her cab. She drove to Mr. Moncure's address; and, careless of precedents regarding janitors, awoke the Cerberus of that series of smart bachelor apartments. He proved to be a mild, mutton-chopped Englishman of the family servant class; hence displayed no resentment at anything for which he was paid. If she was a Miss Riley, Mr. Moncure had left a note, yes, miss. He couldn't reely say, miss, where he'd gone; no doubt he would communicate. And, it being a cold night and he in his shirt and trousers, would she be good enough to excuse him—meanwhile, with the utmost deference, closing the door.

The opened note fell from Rosa's hand. Dunkerley struck a second match. Mr. Moncure wrote to say that by the time this reached her he would be off the Azores. He had thought it all out and decided that was best for both. She was unhappy endeavoring to be what she was not; he had seen that, and it made him unhappy, too. So, much as he wanted her, he was afraid nature had put too many obstacles in the way of their—er—friendship. He could never marry her—it was best to be frank. . . .

"I never *wanted* him to marry me," she was sobbing while Dunkerley read all this—as caddish a note as male ever penned female. Not that Rosa saw it that way. From half an hour of her incoherence, Dunkerley gathered that Moncure had acted like a real gentleman. Accustomed to the society of superior women, her coarse speech, vulgar manners, lack of education and

reasonable conversation had been too much for a super-sensitive soul. "I g-g-guess he c-c-couldn't st-t-stand me any longer. And I was tr-tryin' s-s-so hard t-to be worthy of h-h-him, wa-wa-wasn't I, Bill?" She called Dunkerley "Bill" for some unknown reason: probably because she had known more "Bills" than any other males. . . . He had the man drive twice through Central Park before she calmed down and announced her intention of quitting the stage.

It wasn't no use, she said (to escape her phonetics it is best partly to translate); she couldn't go on. Bill knew she wouldn't have began only for *him*, and now *he'd* beat it, she didn't see no reason for being unhappy. She would go where her friends wasn't ashamed of her and she didn't have to speak with no foreign accent and pretend not to understand plain American. Did he (Bill) think that she was going to be cooped up in hotel rooms all her life and not talk natural to nobody but him? She wasn't, then! She'd like to see herself. Money? What good was money if you didn't have friends to spend it on or with—if you even couldn't go out and have a drink and a dance for fear you'd make a break? . . . She could make plenty of money anyhow. Jail? What was the difference between jail and being cooped up in a hotel room? You had people to talk to in jail anyway—the kind of people you was used to. . . . It didn't make no difference how much he talked, she wasn't going to do it. She'd finish the week and that was all. Contract? Pooh-pooh for the contract. Let him take all she'd made—she didn't care. . . . And the sobbing began afresh.

Dunkerley waited for this to subside before playing his ace. Then he told her, quietly, that she would not only finish the week but the month and the year besides. Then, if she still insisted, she could go; but he knew by that time she'd have come to her senses. . . . Which effectually banished all feminine weakness and aroused her old belligerency. Dunkerley quieted her by strong hands on her wrists.

"Now you listen to me," he said.

"I've waited half my life for a chance like this. Think I'm going to be wept out of it by a damn fool kid? If it wasn't for your own good, I wouldn't say a word. But the way it is, if you make one break, I'll have you jammed into the Bedford Home tomorrow, and you'll do three years as an incorrigible. You're under eighteen, ain't you? Your parents are dead, and it won't be hard to prove you were a pickpocket. Now you mind what I say. I mean it."

For the second time in her life, Rosa Riley thrilled at the sight of a man's eyes looking into hers. But Dunkerley was not thinking of thrilling her, but of those forty weeks on the P. and K. circuit. Anyhow, had the thrill been compared to that other one inspired by Moncure, she would have indignantly resented the comparison; and would have been incredulous if informed that a woman's bitter hatred for a man is but a degree removed from fierce affection.

VIII

SHE became, thereafter, a woman with a secret sorrow plus a grievance. And as a woman, when she has sustained any grievous hurt from a man, delights in making other men miserable, she began to take positive pleasure in the role of the cold and distant foreigner. During their travels throughout the country, she enjoyed the sight of men in front smitten by her charms less than passing them coldly by at the stage door. She loved to seem all feminine softness in hotel lobbies and dining rooms; but at an approach "drew herself up proudly with flashing eyes." Or, else, when Dunkerley could not avoid introductions—mostly in Pullmans—she pretended to know so little English as not to understand even so simple a request as her company at dinner, looking all the more puzzled as they grew more ardent, returning the most willful answers possible—the sort to make their professions of admiration sound absurd. . . . She seemed to derive the utmost satisfaction in driving them to despair—for few elderly men or youngsters could

look on her beauty unmoved and, after they had seen her dance, she seemed to inspire some of them with sudden madness. Several times college boys followed her from one town to another. Once it was an elderly and respectable widower with much money and many children, whom she pretended to misunderstand through three weeks of one-night stands, and finally left swearing to blow out his brains—in which he unduly flattered himself. . . .

A little of this, however, soon served to appease her indignation against men in general, and she adopted a new pose; explaining her gentle melancholy to her admirers with any preposterous story that happened to come into her head—the sudden death of a dearly loved husband, parent, sister or child, always by some violent means, a railway accident, an earthquake, a fire. These tragedies narrated in broken English, supplemented by sobs, were so infinitely pathetic that they checked the most ardent overtures. But this was not enough to divert her during the long days of life in strange cities, and she surprised Dunkerley one day by engaging him in her first friendly conversation since the night of the catastrophe. More than ever was he delighted, for, though he had impressed on her the necessity for reading and study if she was ever to discard her pretense of foreign speech off the stage, she had studiously and insultingly returned all the books he bought for her.

"I want some books, Bill. No, not to study," she added hastily. "Stories to read. About society—the real thing with dooks an' nearls and swell dames. I want to know how they talk an' nact and what all they do. A big bunch that'll last till this damn trip's over. You only got six more months, Bill," she reminded him maliciously. She had taken a real pleasure, ever since that night, in marking off each day of the year; on leaving him each night, never failing to remind him of his promise that she was another twenty-four hours nearer her release from bondage. "Don't forget. A year was all I was to serve," she had said over a hundred times. And

once he had been unwise enough to reply: "You talk as if you were in jail!" What answer he got must be sufficiently obvious.

But now she spoke graciously and wanted books, and next morning he spent all the hours up to matinee time in questioning salesmen and selecting titles. Rosa had to buy a small cabin trunk to contain them: he had cornered the market in society fiction, English, American and Continental. From that time on she was seldom seen without a volume in hand; and one day she gave a surprisingly good imitation of an English character in one of the plays they had seen—she had fallen into his habit of hurrying out of her make-up in order to see the last acts of plays.

His applause at her portrayal gratified her; and she took to reading speeches from her books aloud to him—almost always they were of some superwomen, skilled in the art of intellectual conversation that would not have discredited a De Stael, or else they had Whistlerian repartee at their tongue tips. She was either a born mimic, or else had developed the faculty as so many street children do; and now that it occurred to her to put the speaking of good English on the footing of an imitation, like her South American broken English, she began to learn words and inflections rapidly. But so much did she regard all this as mere impersonation, she was unconscious that to give Dunkerley the full benefit of the contrast, she must force herself to recall certain old Bowery tricks of speech. Never did she imagine seriously that it was possible for her to pass even as one who dwelt near Moncure's borderline.

"The more I read the more I realize how right *he* was, Bill. I don't even see now how he put up with me for a few weeks. Just listen to this"—she read some brilliant worldly dialogue between two women of the type. "To think of me ever thinking *I* could talk like them! And there was a piece in this other book—I marked it for you to explain to me." . . . She found the annotation and gave the text: the conversation of a girl and a man upon some esoteric subject,

certain symbolistic parts of which Dunkerley failed to make clear. "You see—even you're not wise to it. And *you've* got an education. What a chance for me!" She relapsed into a deep and impenetrable gloom.

IX

SOMETIMES, when he left her for the night and she was not sleepy and was tired of reading, she thought it would have been pleasant if he could have remained and talked to her. And on cold Northern nights when she must plunge her thinly clad young body between cold linen sheets—Dunkerley insisting on bedroom windows being open for her health's sake—she would shrink from going to bed at all, and when she finally did go would double up in a mouselike knot, in an effort to keep herself warm, and consider how lonely her life was. Then she would force herself to think sadly of her faithless Adonis, her fashionable Aramis, her fascinating Eugene Wrayburn; would send herself to sleep in exquisite misery picturing him surrounded and adored by the incomparable females of her novels. . . . Yet it was beginning to annoy her to a degree that Dunkerley seemed to be unaffected by her charms. Although his case was hopeless, she wanted him to know that it was hopeless; for him to be heart whole and odiously self-satisfied was annoying to one who was pining away. True, she showed no outward signs of the inward cancer; but, she would have told you, a *woman* would understand. . . .

Dunkerley realized that she still hugged to her thoughts of Moncure; so mastered those hot waves of passion that at times possessed him as suddenly as the one that had swept the blood into his eyes at first sight of her. At first, it had not been necessary to guard himself: she plainly showed she considered him obnoxious; but when she became companionable he was quick to formulate rules to protect his business interests; rules to keep him always the partner, never the man. Hence he always

quitted her room before she began to yawn, avoided her until she sent for him, booked their Pullman berths far apart, never suggested they should patronize the same hotel nor have a single meal together—until in time, as such things do, it became a game with him: a game to which he continually contributed new rules and invented new moves; at which he became so expert that he forgot it was a game at all.

There are many men for whom beautiful women learn to care, who, if they had met them only casually, would have stirred in them no emotion whatever. But let any masterful man, competent and not unattractive, be the continual companion of a beauty and fail to be moved to infatuation, and she becomes vexed and curious: such indifference is a tacit accusation of failing fascinations; and, if she be heart whole, in putting forward additional efforts to snare this wary one, will often fall in her own trap. Rosa soon came to the point where Dunkerley's expertness in the game annoyed her beyond measure. Besides, she was lonely, and loneliness exaggerates the virtues of companionship. Moreover, playing two performances a day, she had no chance to know any other man well, so began to find estimable and lovable qualities in Dunkerley. She did not dare confess this even in secret: that would be to rob herself of some of the sad satisfaction of one who has loved and lost and never again can love at all. She was conscious only of a vague irritation at his callous nature; and decided, to soothe her wounded pride, that such men as he were too commonplace to feel strong emotion. "It's too bad," she told herself candidly, "because he really could make *some woman* happy." Which is a decided concession for a woman: it is a habit of the sex to be astounded at any infatuation for males who do not suit their own notions of what males should be.

Then, one spring day, they were summoned back to New York. One of a pair of tango dancers had broken her ankle, and the moguls of the P. and K. circuit were heavily interested in a

musical revue in which the appearance of such a pair was necessary to the success of a certain scene. And as they had been seen in New York in a "family house" and for only two weeks at that—having then been sent on tour because they conflicted with better known bookings, the act was new to "smart" audiences; who were more frankly surprised than those of vaudeville at the sight of a dancing team in clothes and frocks that they themselves would have been glad to wear. The novelty of the costuming of La Zoë and her partner amply made up for the fact that their dances were no longer new—every known variation of the tango and turkey trot having been recently shown. The first night applause continued until they could only bow—a rare happening before blasé New York audiences; and, next day, the "critics" had their usual say concerning "poetry of motion" in explanation.

The real explanation was that, at last, there had been found an amusement sufficiently primitive and requiring little enough thought to appeal to a whole cityful of mental dwarfs; whose lack of any enthusiasm for opera or music generally, or serious interest in the theater, or the ability to amuse themselves with conversation (even if they could make it) concerning those topics which absorb intelligent people in other countries, had left a yawning gap of boredom. At last the idle overdressed women of all classes had something which would divert them, yet abet their man-hunting—their only congenial occupation; heightening their lure by giving men the sight of sensuous movements and by allowing them the intoxication of a closer physical contact that, yet, surrendered nothing.

So that, soon after the show opened, Dunkerley was informed by the house manager of certain queries as to whether La Zoë and her partner would care to impart instruction in the tango and the turkey trot. If so, the management would be only too pleased to tender the use of the tearoom for the lessons.

"Some 'ad,'" said the press agent. "We'll have Sunday stories all over the country, with flashes of you and the

little lady and all these society skirts trotting in our own little theater. Some 'ad' all right. Some regular money for you, too."

X

THE lessons had been in progress for a week or more before Rosa put in an appearance. Dunkerley told her every night of a new social favorite who had joined the class. He entreated her to take some of the work off his hands. But besides hating the women whom she believed to have separated her from Moncure, she was afraid of them. With their sparkling wit and polished manners, their vast knowledge of matters artistic, musical, literary, international, historical—"and everything," as she put it—she feared that their simplest inquiries, even their usual choice in words, would put her at so decided a disadvantage that her discomfiture would be damnable. Might awaken suspicion, too, in such brilliant minds, as to that South American derivation now so well established. Dunkerley must remember she had met nobody but plain people so far. These women would see through her pitiful pretense. "I don't want half the money," she shrieked a dozen times. "You teach 'em: you take it. It's yours. Stop calling it ours."

But when the first week had yielded more than two hundred dollars in fees, Dunkerley saw that Rosa was impressed. "I tell you what," he said: "you've got these women rated too high, Zoey. I wish you'd come down and look 'em over before you make me hire somebody to help me. Anyhow, I'd lose a lot of 'em if I did. I've been stalling 'em along, saying you weren't well. They expect you every day. I don't know how they'll take it if I have to tell 'em you won't come at all. They might all quit me for that fellow who dances at Sydenham's. What's got you scared? Your foreign accent is immense. They'll never tumble." Then to her objection: "Aw—those books are the bunk!"

But Rosa had all the respect of the ignorant for the printed word. It is very

doubtful if she would have gone at all had not Dunkerley told her the entrance to the tearoom was draped with heavy portières and she might stand outside behind one of the pillars of the promenade—which was dark—there observing the quality of his pupils without her presence being known to them. "You might do *that* before you throw down about fifteen hundred for your share—there'll be three thousand gross if they keep coming until the Newport season starts. But if *you* don't show up . . ."

His deep gloom decided her. His expert assumption of platonic friendship was wearing down her defenses. She had now gone so far as to concede that "if it wasn't she never could love *anybody* again." Now that he was surrounded by the fascinators who had stolen her Adonis—Aramis, her defects would be more noticeable to him: she must make up for this by additional good behavior: stubbornness was fatal to friendship. And the thought of her loneliness, if she lost him, brought sudden tears. Those damned women!

Such thoughts drove her to the theater one spring morning, having lingered an hour or more before her mirror making sure her toilet showed none of those sartorial solecisms that gave the scornful heroines of her novels such chances for amused contempt when speaking of stage women.

She drove to the theater in a taxi, and stole past the stage doorkeeper like one intending dressing room burglary. The curtain was down, the front of the house black. She stumbled twice, but the soft carpet did not betray her. Then with all the caution of a mouse in a strange kitchen, she approached some stray gleams of light and the sound of piano playing. It was several minutes before she equipped herself with sufficient nerve to peep.

The familiar sight of turkey trotting greeted her. Dunkerley was whirling about with a young thing in violet velour. Rosa was glad to note that society women had legs like other people—these had never been mentioned in the novels. But she was somewhat surprised that shocked comment did not

arise on all sides when, doing the "dip," a long black silken stocking was exposed to the knee, revealing to the shocked watcher a habit she associated only with such as her former friends: she herself had long ceased to carry her money there. And, as the couple whirled past the door, she began to wonder if there were not some mistake, if some chorus girl had not slipped in; for the young thing's lips were daintily painted, her eyes were much too concentrically framed not to have had the assistance of a second soft pencil.

Rose shifted the gaze to the others: a dozen or more débutantes, older girls, one matron. All had employed similar subterfuges in the matter of complexion; while the cheeks of most had not escaped some semi-liquid paste, well enough rubbed in to deceive men, maybe, but not women. Nor did they sit in those conventional and dignified attitudes her books had led her to expect: the majority had their legs crossed, and, in a season of tight skirts, that necessitated, before wearing, a careful inspection of silk stockings for suspected runs. No wonder they had not been shocked when those young knees had come into evidence. And, although it is true the novels had made some shamefaced mention of female cigarette smoking, one inferred it a bit of daredeviltry excused by its excessive daintiness; but here were old hands for all their young faces. Not that it wasn't worse to see that stout chaperon with a thick Egyptian hanging from her lower lip.

Rosa was suddenly reminded of a heavy dissipated Spanish woman who had made her flattering offers; who came late with some of her girls. True these young ladies who sat sprawling along the cushioned seats were slenderer, wore simpler clothes and fewer colors; but, with their attitudes of Oriental indolence and careless display of nether limbs, the cigarettes drooping from the fingers of several, the sensuous syncopated tune and the Barbary Coast dance, the scene seemed very similar to one of the visits of the Spanish woman to the dance hall. . . .

Of course, the conversation would be

different, however. Rosa reproached herself for allowing her envy and dislike to make so ridiculous a comparison.

And then the man at the piano ceased playing at Dunkerley's order.

"You see—like this," he added to the young thing in violet, and began gravely to go through certain steps. "Isn't she the baby elephant?" commented another young thing in garnet. "Don't you think trotting is too deevy for words?" remarked a third. "Don't you perfectly adore it, Paula? Yesterday we trotted at Mrs. Paletot's tea, and at the Ogden-Trompers' dinner dance. Anybody who didn't trot might just as well die. I had three with Olly Case—"

"Isn't he just the handsomest thing in the whole world?" demanded Paula eagerly. "I could just leave my happy home for him if anybody was to step right up and ask you. And aren't you just crazy about the way he dances? Just like a perfectly good *Annarovnal*! Oh, no; that's the woman, isn't it? What's the man's name?"

"Mikhailowitch, you mean, my dear?" asked the puffy chaperon woman. "I suppose I ought to rave, oughtn't I? But give me a good Garden show every time. I've been four times to the new one. Have you noticed that perfectly good skunk-trimmed seal sacque that little French devil's wearing in the *Maxim's* scene? Isn't it a scandal such creatures should beat us to the smartest things?"

"They say Olly Case has one of those persons in love with him—that other dancing woman—what's her name? Two thousand a week, my dear. Anyhow, Molly Legay paid Madame *Ondit*, so Olly must have someone. I wonder when Govvy Legay will see through a perfectly good pane of glass?" . . .

The young thing in violet velour, whose place with Dunkerley had been taken by another, now joined them, breathing exhaustedly: "My God! Give me a cigarette, Lou. What's that about Govvy Legay? He got me in a corner at the Orrins' conservatory the other night and nearly tore the dress off my back. He's just a low brute." "You

shouldn't meet him for tea in one of Christophe's private rooms then, my dear," advised an even younger thing who had an aureole of sunny hair and wide-open blue eyes. "That's your Orrin Conservatory!"

"Don't you talk, miss," returned Mr. Legay's detractor significantly. "How could anybody know who was in a Christophe room unless they were on the same floor? There's more than one perfectly good private room, you know." . . .

The puffy woman was seized with a fit of sudden chuckling. "Have you heard the latest about Jean Garnier's place?" she asked. "Well, listen. You know how you young people will slip out at these big crushes? And get back only in time to go home with your chaperons?" There was a chorus of instant denial. "What a shocking old woman you are, Mrs. Delehanty!" said the girl in garnet. At the accusation of antiquity the puffy-faced chaperon pricked up her ears maliciously. "Who was in a rowdy restaurant with a man's coat on last Christmas Eve?" she inquired of Miss Garnet. "It's a low-down lie," muttered the accused sulkily.

"But I was telling you about Jean Garnier's restaurant. The last Canary cotillion, a taxi drove up, and a man with a waiter's overcoat and a two-dollar derby, both borrowed, comes running up the stairs and rings the bell. 'I can't give you a private room, Mr. So-and-So,' says Garnier. 'You've got to, man,' says So-and-So. 'I've got one of the *débutantes* in that taxi.' 'What's that?' says that disrespectful old Garnier. 'I've got one of the *débutantes* in every one of my rooms.'"

None of the listeners thought it wise to refrain from laughing loudly lest the narrator's little suspicious eyes be turned upon them. And the laugh was echoed from the promenade outside. But it was not at the story but at the months she had wasted training for Master Moncure. In that moment Rosa knew subconsciously what the Chinese learned ages ago: that when women are mere creatures for men's physical appetites, social position makes no difference;

which is why a Chinese noblewoman marrying a coolie, or a coolie's daughter marrying a nobleman, each takes her husband's rank; for theirs is a mere change of conditions, not of character.

So Rosa realized why it is so necessary for a woman's clothes to be correct to the smallest detail: outside a certain intonation easily acquired, they are her only real badge of rank. . . . And, confident in both, she pushed aside the draperies and stepped into the room. "Good morning, Mr. Dunkerley," she said unconcernedly. She was no longer afraid; for she knew that if she remembered her accent she need guard neither her speech nor her actions any

more than she had done on the Bowery.

That night she asked Dunkerley to see her home, and at the door of her apartment house, when he would have said good night, she let him know by some subtle intonation that the image of Moncure had been cast down from its shrine and she was now desirous of assistance in trampling on it. "You never come up like you did on the road," she said, prettily petulant. . . .

The next week, Dunkerley's name was added to that list of apartment lessees in which hers figured; but his unofficial residence in the apartment house dated back a full seven days.



WINE OF THE WORLD

By John Hall Wheelock

CLOSE at the lips of Life I lay
And drank fresh ardors all the day
From the beloved eyes and dear
That glowed against me calm and clear.

And reckless still and with unrest
Closer the silent lips I pressed,
But the dark eyes no answer gave,
Burning against me deep and grave.

Day faltered, night drew round about,
The heart within me was wearied out;
Then first beyond the dear head I saw
Shadows and swords of the ancient Awe.

And closer I clung, and closer drew,
To drink and drain the sweet life through
The lips beloved, but through my fears
Their taste was bitter as with tears.

O holy draught, and eyes that weep!
Deeper I drank, and deep, and deep:
The wine of the world is on my lips,
And they are closed in sleep.

THE CHRISTENING

By D. H. Lawrence

THE mistress of the British School stepped down from her school gate, and instead of turning to the left as usual, she turned to the right. Two women who were hastening home to scramble their husbands' dinners together—it was five minutes to four—stopped to look at her. They stood gazing after her for a moment; then they glanced at each other with a woman's little grimace.

To be sure, the retreating figure was ridiculous: small and thin, with a black straw hat, and a rusty cashmere dress hanging full all round the skirt. For so small and frail and rusty a creature to sail with slow, deliberate stride was also absurd. Hilda Rowbotham was less than thirty, so it was not years that set the measure of her pace; she had heart disease. Keeping her face, that was small with sickness but not uncomely, firmly lifted and fronting ahead, the young woman sailed on past the marketplace, like a black swan of mournful, disreputable plumage.

She turned into Berryman's, the baker's. The shop displayed bread and cakes, sacks of flour and oatmeal, fitches of bacon, hams, lard and sausages. The combination of scents was not unpleasing. Hilda Rowbotham stood for some minutes nervously tapping and pushing a large knife that lay on the counter, and looking at the tall, glittering brass scales. At last a morose man with sandy whiskers came down the step from the houseplace.

"What is it?" he asked, not apologizing for his delay.

"Will you give me six pennyworth of assorted cakes and pastries—and put in some macaroons, please?" she asked, in

remarkably rapid and nervous speech. Her lips fluttered like two leaves in a wind, and her words crowded and rushed like a flock of sheep at a gate.

"We've got no macaroons," said the man churlishly.

He had evidently caught that word. He stood waiting.

"Then I can't have any, Mr. Berryman? Now I do feel disappointed. I like one of those macaroons, you know, and it's not often I treat myself. One gets so tired of trying to spoil oneself, don't you think? It's less profitable even than trying to spoil somebody else." She laughed a quick little nervous laugh, putting her hand to her face.

"Then what'll you have?" asked the man, without the ghost of an answering smile. He evidently had not followed, so he looked more glum than ever.

"Oh, anything you have," replied the schoolmistress, flushing slightly. The man moved slowly about, dropping the cakes from various dishes one by one into a paper bag.

"How's that sister o' yours getting on?" he asked, as if he were talking to the flour scoop.

"Whom do you mean?" snapped the schoolmistress.

"The youngest," answered the stooping, pale-faced man, with a note of sarcasm.

"Emma! Oh, she's very well, thank you!" The schoolmistress was very red, but she spoke with sharp, ironical defiance. The man grunted. Then he handed her the bag, and watched her out of the shop without bidding her, "Good afternoon."

She had the whole length of the main street to traverse, a half-mile of slow-

stepping torture, with shame flushing over her neck. But she carried her white bag with an appearance of steadfast unconcern. When she turned into the field she seemed to droop a little. The wide valley opened out from her, with the far woods withdrawing into twilight, and away in the center the great pit streaming its white smoke and chuffing as the men were being turned up. A full, rose-colored moon, like a flamingo flying low from out of the far, dusky east, drew out of the mist. It was beautiful, and it made her irritable sadness soften, diffuse.

Across the field, and she was at home. It was a new, substantial cottage, built with unstinted hand, such a house as an old miner could build himself out of his savings. In the rather small kitchen a woman of dark, saturnine complexion sat nursing a baby in a long white gown; a young woman of heavy, brutal cast stood at the table, cutting bread and butter. She had a downcast, humble mien that sat unnaturally on her, and was strangely irritating. She did not look round when her sister entered. Hilda put down the bag of cakes and left the room, not having spoken to Emma, nor to the baby, nor to Mrs. Carlin, who had come in to help for the afternoon.

Almost immediately the father entered from the yard with a dustpan full of coals. He was a large man, but he was going to pieces. As he passed through, he gripped the door with his free hand to steady himself, but turning, he lurched and swayed. He began putting the coals on the fire, piece by piece. One lump fell from his hand and smashed on the white hearth. Emma Rowbotham looked round, and began in a rough, loud voice of anger: "Look at you!" Then she consciously moderated her tones. "I'll sweep it up in a minute—don't you bother; you'll only be going head first into the fire."

Her father bent down nevertheless to clear up the mess he had made, saying, articulating his words loosely and slavering in his speech:

"The lousy bit of a thing, it slipped between my fingers like a fish."

As he spoke he went tilting toward the fire. The dark-browed woman cried out; he put his hand on the hot stove to save himself; Emma swung round and dragged him off.

"Didn't I tell you!" she cried roughly. "Now, have you burnt yourself?"

She held tight hold of the big man, and pushed him into his chair.

"What's the matter?" cried a sharp voice from the other room. The speaker appeared, a hard, well favored woman of twenty-eight. "Emma, don't speak like that to father." Then, in a tone not so cold, but just as sharp: "Now, father, what have you been doing?"

Emma withdrew to her table sullenly. "It's nōwt," said the old man, vainly protesting. "It's nōwt at a'. Get on wi' what you're doin' of."

"I'm afraid 'e's burnt 'is 'and," said the black-browed woman, speaking of him with a kind of hard pity, as if he were a cumbersome child. Bertha took the old man's hand and looked at it, making a quick tut-tutting noise of impatience:

"Emma, get that zinc ointment—and some white rag," she commanded sharply. The younger sister put down her loaf with the knife in it, and went. To a sensitive observer, this obedience was more intolerable than the most hateful discord. The dark woman bent over the baby and made silent, gentle movements of motherliness to it. The little one smiled and moved on her lap. It continued to move and twist.

"I believe this child's hungry," she said. "How long is it since he had anything?"

"Just afore dinner," said Emma dully.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Bertha.

"You needn't starve the child now you've got it. Once every two hours it ought to be fed, as I've told you; and now it's three. Take him, poor little mite—I'll cut the bread." She bent and looked at the bonny baby. She could not help herself: she smiled, and pressed its cheek with her finger, and nodded to it, making little noises. Then she turned and took the loaf from her sister. The woman rose and gave the child to its mother. Emma bent

over the little sucking mite. She hated it when she looked at it, and saw it as a symbol, but when she felt it, her love was like fire in her blood.

"I should think 'e canna be comin'," said the father uneasily, looking up at the clock.

"Nonsense, father—the clock's fast! It's but half past four! Don't fidget!" Bertha continued to cut the bread and butter.

"Open a tin of pears," she said to the woman, in a much milder tone. Then she went into the next room. As soon as she was gone, the old man said again: "I should ha'e thought he'd 'a' been 'ere by now, if he means comin'."

Emma, engrossed, did not answer. The father had ceased to consider her, since she had become humbled.

"E'll come—e'll come!" assured the stranger.

A few minutes later Bertha hurried into the kitchen, taking off her apron. The dog barked furiously. She opened the door, commanded the dog to silence, and said: "He will be quiet now, Mr. Kendal."

"Thank you," said a sonorous voice, and there was the sound of a bicycle being propped against a wall. A clergyman entered, a big-boned, thin, ugly man of nervous manner. He went straight to the father.

"Ah—how are you?" he asked musically, peering down on the great frame of the miner, ruined by locomotor ataxia.

His voice was full of gentleness, but he seemed as if he could not see distinctly, could not get things clear.

"Have you hurt your hand?" he said comfortingly, seeing the white rag.

"It wor nōwt but a pestered bit o' coal as dropped, an' I put my hand on th' hub. I thought tha worna commin'."

The familiar "tha," and the reproach, were unconscious retaliation on the old man's part. The minister smiled, half wistfully, half indulgently. He was full of vague tenderness. Then he turned to the young mother, who flushed sullenly because her dishonored breast was uncovered.

"How are you?" he asked, very softly

and gently, as if she were ill and he were mindful of her.

"I'm all right," she replied, awkwardly taking his hand without rising, hiding her face and the anger that rose in her.

"Yes—yes"—he peered down at the baby, which sucked with distended mouth upon the firm breast. "Yes, yes." He seemed lost in a dim musing.

Coming to, he shook hands unseeingly with the woman.

Presently they all went into the next room, the minister hesitating to help his crippled old deacon.

"I can go by myself, thank yer," testily replied the father.

Soon all were seated. Everybody was separated in feeling and isolated at table. The high tea was spread in the middle kitchen, a large, ugly room kept for special occasions.

Hilda appeared last, and the clumsy, rawboned clergyman rose to meet her. He was afraid of this family, the well-to-do old collier and the brutal, self-willed children. But Hilda was queen among them. She was the clever one, and had been to college. She felt responsible for the keeping up of a high standard of conduct in all the members of the family. There was a difference between the Rowbothams and the common collier folk. Woodbine Cottage was a superior house to most—and was built in pride by the old man. She, Hilda, was a college-trained schoolmistress; she meant to keep up the prestige of her house in spite of blows.

She had put on a dress of green voile for this special occasion. But she was very thin; her neck protruded painfully. The clergyman, however, greeted her almost with reverence, and, like a queen, she sat down before the tray. At the far end of the table sat the broken, massive frame of her father. Next to him was the youngest daughter, nursing the restless baby. The minister sat between Hilda and Bertha, hulking his bony frame uncomfortably.

There was a great spread on the table, of tinned fruits and tinned salmon, ham and cakes. Miss Rowbotham kept a keen eye on everything; she felt the im-

portance of the occasion. The young mother who had given rise to all this solemnity ate in sulky discomfort, snatching bright little smiles at her child, smiles which came, in spite of her, when she felt its little limbs stirring vigorously on her lap. Bertha, sharp and abrupt, was chiefly concerned with the baby. She scorned her sister, and treated her like dirt. But the infant was a streak of light to her. Miss Rowbotham concerned herself with the function and the conversation. Her hands fluttered; she talked in little volleys, exceedingly nervous. Toward the end of the meal, there came a pause. The old man wiped his mouth with his red handkerchief, then, his blue eyes going fixed and staring, he began to speak, in a loose, slobbering fashion, charging his words at the clergyman.

"Well, mester—we'n axed you to come here ter christen this childt, an' you'n come, an' I'm sure we're very thankful. I can't see lettin' the poor blessed baby miss baptizing, an' they aren't for goin' to church wi't—" He seemed to lapse into a muse. "So," he resumed, "we'n axed you to come here to do the job. I'm not sayin' as it's not 'ard on us, it is. I'm breakin' up, an' mother's gone. I don't like leavin' a girl o' mine in a situation like 'ers is, but what the Lord's done, He's done, an' it's no matter murmurin'. . . . There's one thing to be thankful for, an' we *are* thankful for it: they never need know want of bread."

Miss Rowbotham, the lady of the family, sat very stiff and pained during this discourse. She was sensitive to so many things that she was bewildered. She felt her young sister's shame, then a kind of swift protecting love for the baby, a feeling that included the mother; she was at a loss before her father's religious sentiment, and she felt and resented bitterly the mark upon the family, against which the common folk could lift their fingers. So she sat frustrated.

"It is hard for you," began the clergyman in his soft, strange, unworldly voice. "It is hard for you today, but tomorrow it may be better. A man

child is born unto us, therefore let us rejoice: and sin has entered in among us; we must purify our hearts before the Lord . . ."

He went on with his discourse. The young mother lifted the whimpering infant, which then got its fingers entangled in her loose hair. She was hurt, and a little glowering anger shone in her face. But nevertheless her fingers unwound the small hand of the baby delicately. She was stupefied by all this emotion let loose on her account.

Miss Bertha rose and went to the little kitchen, returning with water in a china bowl. She placed it there among the tea things.

"Well, we're all ready," said the old man, and the clergyman began to read the service. Miss Bertha was god-mother, the two men godfathers. The old man sat with bent head. The scene became impressive. At last Miss Bertha took the child and put it in the arms of the clergyman. He, big and ugly, shone with a kind of unworldly love. He had never mixed with life, and women were all far-off Biblical things to him. When he asked for the name, the old man lifted his head fiercely. "Joseph William, after me," he said, almost out of breath.

"Joseph William, I baptize thee . . ." sang the strange, full, chanting voice of the clergyman. They had all forgotten the room and the tea things. The baby was quite still.

"Let us pray!" It came with relief to them all. They knelt before their chairs, all but the young mother, who bent and hid herself over her baby. The clergyman began his hesitating, struggling prayer.

Just then heavy footsteps were heard coming up the path, ceasing at the window. The young mother, glancing up, saw her brother, black in his pit dirt, grinning in through the panes. His red mouth curved in a sneer; his fair hair shone above his blackened skin. He caught the eye of his sister and grinned. Then his black face disappeared. He had gone on into the kitchen. The girl with the child sat still and anger filled her heart. She herself hated now the

praying clergyman; she hated her brother bitterly. In bondage she sat and listened.

Suddenly her father began to pray. His familiar, loud, rambling voice made her shut herself up and become even unsensitive. Folks said his mind was weakening. She half believed it to be true, and kept herself always disconnected from him.

"We ask Thee, Lord," the old man cried, "to look after this child. Father he has none. But what does the man matter? Haven't I got sons who disown me as leave as look? Lord, what father has a man but Thee? For my sons and my children, they have no use for me. But let me go, Lord—and then who will there be to look after this child? Lord, stan' by him as 'as no father here. O God, Thou bring him up. For I have stood between Thee and my children; I've cast them in shadow, Lord; I've stood between Thee and my children; I've cut 'em off an' had it my own road, ordering their lives. And now they've grown twisted, trying to get away from me. It was Thee as was their father by rights, but I put myself up against Thee and against them, an' they've fought against me like plants under a stone and now they are twisted. If they'd had no father to ha' mismanaged 'em, they might ha' been like trees in the sunshine: an' now they're all for sprawling. Let me go, Lord, let me go; I've done 'em mischief. It would ha' been better if I'd never said, 'I am your father.' No man is a father, Lord: only Thou art. They can never grow beyond Thee, but I hampered them. Lift 'em up again, and undo what I've done to my own children. And let this young child be like a willow tree beside the waters, with no father but Thee, O God. Ay, an' I wish it had been so with my children, that they'd had no father but Thee. For I've been like a stone upon them, and they shall rise up and call me cursèd. But let me go, an' lift them up when I'm gone, Lord . . ."

The minister, unaware of the feelings of a father, knelt in trouble, accepting without understanding the special symbolism of fatherhood. Miss Rowbotham

alone felt and understood a little. Her heart began to flutter; she was afraid of an attack of palpitation. The two younger daughters knelt unhearing. Bertha was thinking of the baby; and the young mother of the father of her child, whom she hated. There was a clatter outside in the scullery. There the youngest son made as much noise as he could, pouring out the water for his wash, muttering in deep anger:

"Blortin', slaverin' old fool!"

And while the praying of his father continued, his heart was burning with rage. On the table was a paper bag. He picked it up and read, "John Berryman—Bread, Pastries, etc." Then he grinned. The father of the baby was baker's man at Berryman's. The prayer went on in the middle kitchen. Laurie Rowbotham gathered together the mouth of the bag, inflated it, and burst it with his fist. There was a loud report. He grinned to himself.

The father broke off from his prayer; the party shuffled to their feet. The young mother went into the scullery.

"What art doin', fool?" she said.

The collier youth tipped the baby under the chin, singing:

"Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake as fast as you can. . . ."

The mother snatched the child away. "Shut thy mouth," she said, the color coming into her cheek.

"Prick it and stick it and mark it with P,
And put it i' th' oven for baby an' me. . . ."

Like a grimy young satyr he grinned, showing a red mouth and white teeth.

"I s'll gi'e thee a dab ower th' mouth," said the mother of the baby grimly. He began to sing again, and she struck out at him.

"Now what's to do?" said the father, staggering in.

The youth began to sing again. His sister stood sullen and furious.

"Why does *that* upset you?" asked the eldest Miss Rowbotham, with some contempt, of Emma the mother. "Good gracious, it hasn't improved your temper."

Miss Bertha came in, and took the bonny baby.

A FLURRY IN REAL ESTATE

By Rose Mary Kaplan

THE Dreamer had taken the Débutante in to supper. She was fresh, sweet and deliciously young, and quite breathless at her first peep into the social world.

A Personage wearing a diamond dog collar, the better to hide a superfluous chin, glanced at the two with calm, appraising eyes. "Why *will* men of brains succumb to the first pretty doll they meet?" was the wonder thought which flashed through her brain, and was then dismissed with a shrug of her plump shoulders, as she resumed her duties as hostess. But really the Dreamer was not much to blame, for the "pretty doll" was very lovely—and he hadn't, as yet, seen the sawdust. His eyes were filled with the image of the girl at his side, and turning toward her as though to shut out all the rest of the world, he began to talk of his work, his travels and his books—and was brought up suddenly when, in the midst of an amusing anecdote which he was telling extremely well, she asked him to point out the various people of interest at the table.

Scanning, in an amused way, the collection of lions gnawing contentedly at imported bones, he showed her those who could roar, those who would roar and those who had to be made to roar. She listened, then, centering her wandering eyes and attention upon her informer, turned and asked in a charmingly interrogative manner: "And what do *you* do?" The Dreamer laughed. Such a willful display of ignorance in regard to his much heralded self was new and decidedly refreshing. He wondered if it were a pose—but her eyes were too serious, and her polite display of interest too exactly the proper thing.

He thought her delicious, and came very near telling her so, but stopped abruptly and passed the salted almonds instead, deciding to find out if there were any smiles tucked away in the corners of her mouth or perhaps a stray dimple or two hidden in the soft curve of her cheek. "For," thought the Dreamer, "a woman without humor is like summer without any roses."

His quizzical eyes twinkled into her unresponsive gray ones, and in response to her question he said, in the serio-comic style that had made him famous: "In me you behold the owner of vast real estate in Spain! Quite a lot of it, I assure you. I am also something of an architect, and have built up rather a large number of nice little palaces out there. Upon my soul," said the Dreamer reflectively, "when I think of the number, it is something to wonder at! But my castles in Spain are very dear to me."

The Débutante sat up very straight. She had heard her father discuss the ways and means of real estate deals. She could, at least, give him a bit of advice. "Why," said she, sweetly serious, "don't you sell out? Fancy owning a lot of property in an out-of-the-way place like that!"

The Dreamer stared at her for a moment, rather blankly. Then he raised his head with a comical gesture and stared again, quite frankly, as though seeing her for the first time. She thought he was considering her advice, and felt quite complimented when he said, drily: "Thanks; I occasionally do! At this very moment"—and he gazed down into her eyes, still serious—"at this very moment there is pasted a large 'For Rent' sign on the very newest of my buildings."

THE AMERICAN: HIS NEW PURITANISM

By H. L. Mencken

NOT, of course, that the Puritan spirit of 1620 has ever gone into actual eclipse in These States, or suffered more than a temporary damping. Far from it, indeed! Make the most cursory review of American history that you will, and you must surely be impressed by the persistence of the Puritan outlook upon the world, the Puritan conviction of the pervasiveness of sin, the Puritan lust to make a sinner sweat and yell. If there is one mental vice, indeed, which sets off the American people from all other folks who walk the earth, not excepting the devil-fearing Scotch, it is that of assuming that every human act must be either right or wrong, and that ninety-nine percent of them are wrong. This is the one great American contribution to the science of ethics, and the cornerstone of the American philosophy.

There has never been a large political or social question before the American people which did not quickly resolve itself into a moral question. Even so dull a row as that over the currency produced its vast crop of saints and succubi, of Iokanaans and Pontius Pilates, of crimes, heathenries and crowns of thorns. Nor has there ever been any letting up of that spiritual eagerness which lay at the bottom of the original Puritan's moral obsession: the American has remained, from the very beginning, a man genuinely interested in the eternal riddles. The frank theocracy of the New England beach had scarcely succumbed to the libertarianism of a licentious Crown before there came the Great Awakening of 1734, with its orgies of

homiletics and its chase of sinners. The Revolution, of course, brought another setback. But the moment the young Republic got out of the nursery and could protect itself from foes abroad, its citizens resumed the glad business of dragging one another up to grace, and the Asbury revival made that of Whitefield, Wesley and Jonathan Edwards seem a mild and puerile thing.

Thereafter, down to the outbreak of the Civil War, the whole populace joined in pulling the devil's tail. On the one hand, this great campaign took a purely theological form, with a hundred new and outlandish cults as its fruits; on the other hand, it crystallized into the hysterical temperance movement of the thirties and forties, with its Good Templars on horseback and its drunkards in cages; and on the third hand, as it were, it established a prudery in thought and speech from which we are still but half delivered. Such ancient and innocent words as "wench" and "bastard" disappeared from the American language; we are told by Bartlett, indeed, that even "bull" was softened to "male cow." The word "woman" became a term of opprobrium, verging close upon downright libel; legs became the inimitable "limbs"; the "stomach" began to run from the "bosom" to the pelvic arch; pantaloons faded into "unmentionables"; the newspapers spun their parts of speech into such gossamer webs as "a statutory offense," "an interesting condition" and "a house of questionable repute." And meanwhile evangelists of all sorts swarmed in the land like a plague of locusts, and the

lyceum and the camp meeting, father and mother to the chautauqua of a later day, were born. State after State went "dry"; legislature after legislature stepped up to sign the pledge. Even the national House of Representatives was penetrated by this primeval uplift, and on more than one occasion it offered its rostrum to some eminent flayer of the Rum Demon, and spread his excoriations upon its minutes.

Beneath all this gay bubbling on the surface, of course, ran the deep and swift current of anti-slavery feeling—a tide of passion which historians now attempt to account for on economic grounds, but which showed no trace of economic origin while it lasted. Its true quality was moral, devout, ecstatic; it culminated, to change the figure, in a supreme discharge of moral electricity, almost fatal to the nation. The crack of that great spark emptied the jar: the American people forgot all their pledges and their pruderies during the four years of the Civil War. The Good Templars, indeed, were seldom heard of again, and with them into memory went many other singular virtuosi of virtue—for example, the Millerites. But this truce with the devil was for the moment only: it was no more than the adjournment of the patent medicine show while the circus parade went by. The instant the smoke of the battlefields cleared away, the Puritans returned to their old sport of shaking up the erring, and by the middle of the seventies they were at it in full fuming and fury. The high points of that holy war halt the backward-looking eye: the Moody and Sankey uproar; the recrudescence of the temperance agitation and its culmination in prohibition; the rise of the Young Men's Christian Association, the Sunday school and the Christian Endeavor movement; the triumphal entry of the Salvation Army, regardless of all the warnings of Thomas Henry Huxley; the dim beginnings of the vice crusade; the injection of moral concepts and rages into party politics (the "crime" of 1873!); the loud preaching of baroque Utopias (Populism, Belamyism, "If Christ Came to Chicago," Bryanism); the invention of muckrak-

ing and trust busting; the mad, glad war of extermination upon the Mormons, the anarchists, the Spaniards; the hysteria over the Breckinridge-Pollard case; the enormous multiplication of moral and religious associations, each with its sure cure for all the sorrows of the world; the spread of zoöphilia, the dawn of the uplift, and last but far from least, Comstockery.

In Comstockery, if I do not err, the new Puritanism took its formal departure from the old, and moral endeavor suffered a general overhauling and tightening of screws. The difference between the two forms is very well represented by the difference between the program of the half-forgotten Good Templars and the program set forth in the Webb Law of 1913, or by that between the somewhat diffident prudery of the forties and the astoundingly ferocious and uncompromising crusading of today. In brief, a difference between *renunciation* and *denunciation*, asceticism and Mohammedanism, the hair shirt and the flaming sword. The distinguishing mark of the elder Puritanism, at least after it had attained to the stature of a national philosophy, was its appeal to the individual conscience, its exclusive concern with the demon within, its strong flavor of self-accusing. Even the rage against slavery was, in large measure, an emotion of the mourner's bench. The thing that worried the more ecstatic Abolitionists was their sneaking sense of responsibility, the fear that they themselves were flouting the fire by letting slavery go on. The thirst to punish the concrete slaveowner, as an end in itself, did not appear until opposition had added exasperation to fervor. In most of the earlier harangues against the sinful Southern planter, indeed, you will find a perfect willingness to grant his good faith, and even to compensate him for his property.

But the new Puritanism—or, perhaps more accurately, considering the shades of prefixes, the neo-Puritanism—is a frank harking back to the primitive spirit. The *stammvater* Puritan of the bleak New England coast was not content to flay his own wayward carcass:

full satisfaction did not sit upon him until he had also butchered a Quaker. That is to say, the sinner who excited his highest zeal and passion was not so much himself as the other fellow; to borrow a term from psychopathology, he was less the masochist than the sadist. And it is that very peculiarity which sets off his descendant of today from the milder Puritan of the period between the Revolution and the Civil War. The new Puritanism is not ascetic but militant. Its aim is not to lift up the saint but to knock down the sinner. Its supreme manifestation is the vice crusade, an armed pursuit of helpless outcasts by the whole military and naval forces of the Republic, a wild scramble into Heaven on the backs of harlots. Its supreme hero is Comstock Himself, with his pious glory in the fact that the sinners he has jailed, if gathered into one penitential party, would fill a train of sixty-one railroad coaches, allowing sixty to the coach.

But how are we to account for this turning inside out? How did the Puritan come to transfer his holy ire from the Old Adam within him to the happy rascal across the street? In what direction are we to look for the springs and causes of that revolutionary change? In the direction, I venture to opine, of the Golden Calf. In the direction of the fat fields of our midlands, the full nets of our lakes and coasts, the belching factory smoke of our cities—even in the direction of Wall Street, that devil's chasm. In brief, Puritanism has become militant by becoming rich. Moral endeavor has become a huge and well organized business, heavily capitalized, superbly officered, perfectly armed. Wealth, coming to the aid of piety, has reached out its long arms to grab the distant and innumerable evildoer, the far-flung rebel, the happy runaway; it has gone down into its deep pockets to pay for his capture, his extradition, his flaying; it has created the Puritan *de luxe*, the daring organizer of Puritanism, the moral Lorenzo the Magnificent, the czar and pope of snoutery, the busybody of the fourth dimension. And by the same token, it has created a new science and

art of sinner hunting, and issued its letters of marque to the Puritan mercenary, the professional hound of Heaven, the specialist in crusading, the moral "expert."

The Puritans of the elder generation, with few exceptions, were poor. All Americans, down to the Civil War, were poor. And, being poor, they leaned irresistibly toward a *sklavmoral*, for all their surface contentment. That is to say, they were spiritually humble. Their eyes were fixed, not upon the abyss behind and below them, but upon the long and rocky road ahead of them. Their moral passion was limitless, but it had a habit of turning into self-accusing, self-denial, self-scourging. They began by howling their sins from the mourner's bench; they came to their end, many of them, in the supreme immolation of battle. But out of the war came prosperity, and out of prosperity came a new and more assertive morality, to wit, the *herrenmoral*. Many great fortunes were made in the war itself; an uncounted number got started during the two decades following. What is more, this material prosperity, so soothing to the troubled soul, was generally dispersed through all classes: it affected the common workman and the remote farmer quite as much as the actual merchant and manufacturer. Its first effect, as we all know, was a universal cockiness, a rise in pretensions, a comfortable feeling that the republic was a success, and with it its every citizen. This change made itself quickly obvious, and even odious, in all the secular relations of life. The American became a sort of braggart playboy of the Western world, enormously sure of himself and ludicrously contemptuous of all other men, including his own countrymen. Kipling, coming later, embalmed him in an unforgettable stanza:

Enslaved, illogical, elate,
He greets th' embarrassed Gods, nor fears
To shake the iron hand of Fate
Or match with Destiny for beers.

And on the ghostly side there appeared the same accession of confidence, the same sure assumption of authority, though at first less self-evidently and

offensively. The religion of the American began to lose its old inward direction; it became less and less a scheme of personal salvation and more and more a scheme of pious derring-do. The revivals of the seventies had all the bounce and fervor of those of half a century before, but the mourner's bench began to lose its old standing as their symbol, and in its place arose the collection basket, the endowment, the *kriegskasse*. Instead of reviling and damning himself, the tear-soaked convert now volunteered to track down and bring in the other fellow. His enthusiasm was not for repentance, expiation, atonement, but for what he began to call service. In brief, the national sense of energy and fitness gradually superimposed itself upon the Puritanism, and from that marriage sprang a keen *wille zur macht*, a lusty will to power. The Puritan began to feel his oats. He had the men, he had the guns and he had the money, too. All that was needed was organization. The rescue of the unsaved could be converted into a wholesale business, unsentimentally and economically conducted, and with all the usual aids to efficiency, from skillful sales management to seductive advertising, and from rigid accounting to the ruthless shutting off of competition.

Out of this new will to power, founded upon the old Christian idea that even the devil may be bought off, there came many brobdingnagian and wind-flied enterprises, with the so-called "institutional" church at their head. Piety, once so simple and so lowly, became bumptious and protean. It was cunningly rolled in sugar and rammed down unsuspecting throats. It became basketball, billiards, bowling alleys, gymnasias. The sinner was lured to grace with Turkish baths, lectures on Gothic architecture and free instruction in stenography, rhetoric and double entry book-keeping. The prevailing Christianity lost all its old contemplative and esoteric character and became a frankly worldly venture, a thing of balance sheets and ponderable profits, magnificently capitalized and astutely manned. Naturally enough, there was no place in this new

scheme of things for the spiritual type of leader, the fledgling archangel, the master devotee, with his white chokers, his affecting austerities and his interminable "fourthlies." He was displaced by a brisk gentleman in a "business suit," who looked, talked and thought like a seller of Mexican mining stock.

Plan after plan for the swift evangelization of the nation was launched, some of them of truly astonishing sweep and daring. They kept pace, step by step, with the mushroom growth of enterprise in the commercial field. The Y. M. C. A. swelled to the proportions of a Standard Oil Company, a United States Steel Corporation. Its huge buildings began to rise in every city; it developed a swarm of specialists in new and fantastic moral and social sciences; it enlisted the same gargantuan talent which managed the railroads, the big banks and the larger national industries. And beside it rose the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, the Sunday school associations and a score of other such grandiose organizations, each with its millions of adherents and its fathomless treasury. No new device of rapid fire conquest was too ridiculous to bring forth volunteers and money. Even the undertakings that had come down from an elder and less expansive day were pumped up and put upon a Wall Street basis: the American Bible Society, for example, began to give away Bibles by the million instead of by the thousand, and to invent new languages to print them in, and the venerable Tract Society took on the feverish activity of a daily newspaper, even of a yellow journal. Down into our own day this trustification (to coin a bad word) of pious endeavor has gone on. The Men and Religion Forward Movement proposes to convert the whole country, including the insular possessions, by twelve o'clock noon of such and such a day; the Student Volunteer Movement announces that, given so many more millions, the whole mainland of Asia will be as good as saved; the Order of Gideons announces that it will make every traveler read the Bible (American Revised Version!), whether he will or

not; in a score of cities there are committees of opulent *hadjis* who take half-pages in the newspapers and advertise the Decalogue and the Beatitudes as if they were commodities of trade.

Thus the national energy which created the Beef Trust and the Oil Trust has achieved equal marvels in the field of religious organization, and by the same methods. One need be no very subtle psychologist to perceive in all this a good deal less actual religious zeal than mere lust for staggering accomplishment, for empty bigness, for the unprecedented and the prodigious. Many of these great evangelical enterprises, indeed, lost all save the faintest flavor of devotion soon after they were set up—for example, the Y. M. C. A., which is now no more than a sort of national club system, with its doors open to anyone not palpably felonious.

But while the war upon godlessness thus degenerated into a purely secular sport in one direction, it maintained all its pristine quality, and even took on a new ferocity, in another direction. Here it was that the lamp of American Puritanism kept on burning. Here it was, indeed, that the lamp became converted into a huge bonfire, or rather a blast furnace, with flames mounting to the very heavens, and sinners stacked like cordwood at the hand of an eager black gang. In brief, the new will to power, working in the true Puritan as in the mere religious sportsman, stimulated him to a campaign of repression and punishment perhaps unequalled since the Middle Ages, and developed an art of militant morality as complex in technique and as rich in professors as the more ancient art of iniquity.

If we take the passage of the Comstock Postal Act, on March 3, 1873, as a starting point, the legislative stakes of this new Puritan movement sweep upward in a grand curve to the passage of the Mann and Webb acts, in 1911 and 1913, the first of which ratifies and reenacts the Seventh Commandment with a salvo of artillery, and the second of which puts the overwhelming power of the Federal Government behind the enforcement of the prohibition laws in

the so-called "dry" States. The mind at once recalls the salient campaigns of this war of a generation: first the attack upon "vicious" literature (*i.e.*, upon Tolstoi's "The Kreutzer Sonata," Hauptmann's "Hannele" and the whole canon of Zola) begun by Comstock and the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, but quickly extending to every city in the land; then the long fight upon the open gambling houses, culminating in its retreat behind the skirts of a corrupted constabulary; then the revival of prohibition, abandoned at the outbreak of the Civil War, and the grotesque attempt to enforce it in a growing list of States; then the successful onslaught upon the Louisiana lottery, and upon its swarm of rivals and successors; then the gradual stamping out of horse racing, and the ensuing attack upon the poolroom; then the rise of a theater censorship in all of the large cities, and of a moving picture censorship following; then the renaissance of Sabbatarianism, with the Lord's Day Alliance, a Canadian invention, in the van; then the attack upon the army canteen; then the gradual tightening of the laws against polygamy, with the Roberts and Smoot cases and the unenforceable New York Adultery Act as typical products; and lastly, the general plowing up and emotional discussion of sexual matters, chiefly by man haters male and female, with compulsory instruction in "sex hygiene" as its mildest manifestation and the medieval fury of the vice crusade as its worst.

Differing widely in their targets and working methods, these various Puritan enterprises have had one character in common: they are all efforts to combat immorality with the weapons designed for crime. In each of them there is a visible effort to erect the individual's offense against himself into an offense against society. Beneath all of them there is the dubious principle—the very determining principle, indeed, of Puritanism—that it is competent for the community to limit and condition the most private acts of its members, and with it the inevitable corollary that there are some members of the community

who have a special talent for such legislation, and that their arbitrary fiats are, and of a right ought to be, binding upon all. This is the essential fact of Puritanism, new or old: its recognition of the moral expert, the professional sinhound, the virtuoso of virtue. The difference between the old and the new is merely a difference in organization, in magnitude and in virulence.

Under the theocracy, of course, the chase and punishment of sinners was a purely ecclesiastical function, and almost of a sacramental character. The laity might lend a hand, but only under sacerdotal direction. Even the sworn officers of the law, when they took to the trail of heretics, did so as mere agents of the higher power. But with the disintegration of the theocracy, there came a gradual augmentation of lay authority, and by the time the new Puritanism dawned, the secular arm was triumphant. That is to say, the special business of pursuing and faying the erring was taken away from the preachers and put into the hands of laymen diligently trained in its technique and mystery, and there it remains today. The new Puritanism has created an army of inquisitors and headmen who are not only distinct from the hierarchy, but who, in many instances, actually command and intimidate the hierarchy. This is conspicuously evident in the case of the Anti-Saloon League, a nationwide and enormously effective fighting organization, with a large staff of highly accomplished experts in its service. These experts do not wait for ecclesiastical support, nor even ask for it: they force it. Any clergyman who presumes to protest against their furious war upon the saloon, even upon the quite virtuous ground that its excesses make it ineffective, runs a risk of condign and merciless punishment. So plainly is this understood, indeed, that in more than one State the clergy of the Puritan denominations openly take orders from the lay specialists, and court their favors without shame. It is in that direction that all ecclesiastical preferment lies, and by that route more than

one bishop has been manufactured. Here a single Puritan enterprise, heavily capitalized and superbly officered, has engulfed the entire Puritan movement, and a part has become more than the whole.

In a dozen other sanguinary fields of moral combat this tendency to transform a religious business into a purely secular business, with lay backers and lay commanders, is plainly visible. The increasing wealth of Puritanism has not only augmented its scope and audacity, but it has also had the effect of attracting clever men, of no particular spiritual enthusiasm, to its service. Moral endeavor, in other words, has become a recognized trade, or rather a profession, and there have appeared men who pretend to an expert and enormous knowledge of it, and who show enough truth in their pretension to gain the unlimited support of Puritan capitalists. The vice crusade, to mention but one example, has produced a large crop of such experts, and some of them are in such demand that they are overwhelmed with engagements. The majority of these men come from the social settlements and freshwater colleges, with a sprinkling of unsuccessful physicians and second-rate lawyers to lighten the mass, and they seldom show the slightest flavor of sacerdotalism. They are not pastors, nor even lay preachers, but detectives, press agents, statisticians and mob orators, and not infrequently their secularity is distressingly evident. Their aim, as they say, is to do things. Their success is measured by the turmoil they can stir up and the number of scalps they can take. And so, with "moral sentiment" behind them, they override all criticism and opposition without argument, and proceed to the business of dispersing prostitutes, of browbeating and terrorizing weak officials, and of forcing extravagant legislation through city councils and State legislatures.

The very cocksureness of these self-constituted authorities is their chief source of strength. They combat objections with such violence and with such devastating cynicism that all objectors are quickly driven to flight. The more

astute politicians, in the face of so ruthless a fire, commonly profess conversion and join the colors, just as their brethren go over to prohibition in the "dry" States, and the newspapers seldom hold out much longer. The result is that the "investigation" of the social evil, a business demanding the highest prudence and sagacity, becomes an orgy of quacks and mountebanks, and that the ensuing "report" of the inevitable "vice commission" is made up of two parts pornographic fiction and three parts pious platitude. Of all the vice commissions that have held the stage in the United States of late, not one has done its work without the help of these singularly vociferous rabble-rousers, and not one has contributed a single new idea, nor even an old idea of undoubted value, to the solution of the problem.

But it is not only in the twin wars upon the brothel and the saloon that the new Puritan specialist has usurped the old office of the clergy, nor does he here best reveal his growing potency. These wars, after all, are quite as much secular as religious: an atheist might conceivably be as strongly in favor of closing dramshops and hounding prostitutes as the most orthodox pietist. But what of the campaign for Sabbath observance, and, in particular, for the drastic enforcement of draconian Blue Laws? The call here would seem to be upon the gentlemen of the cloth: the whole argument against recreation on Sunday is essentially a theological one, whatever may be the character of the argument against work. And yet the direction of the campaign has been gradually taken over by lay bravos, and the general staff is now a purely secular organization, with trained sub-staffs for handling definite portions of the work—for example, the collection of contributions and informers' fees, the preparation and circulation of literature, the gathering of evidence against offenders, and last but far from least, the operation of legislative lobbies. So successful and inviting has this business become, indeed, that a good many clergymen have actually abandoned the pulpit in order to engage in it. It is interesting,

it is lucrative, and in view of the nine lives of the devil, it promises to be permanent. In nearly every State there is now a strong central organization with a multitude of branches, all living upon the country, all adding local embellishments to the main jihad. And in Washington there is a national bureau with its guns trained upon Congress—and more than once of late the lawmakers have performed wild mazurkas to its whistling.

But I need not go on piling up examples of this new form of Puritan snouting and rowelling, with its radical departure from a religious foundation and its elaborate development as an everyday business. The impulse behind it I have called a *wille zur macht*, a will to power. In terms more homely, it was described by John Fiske as "the disposition to domineer," and in his unerring way he lays its dependence upon the gratuitous assumption of infallibility, an immemorial characteristic of the Puritan mind. Every Puritan is a one-horse Pope, a Sheik ul Islam, an amateur Messiah: to dissent from his private revelation is to be nominated for his hell. He cannot imagine honesty in an opponent, nor even ordinary decency. But still stronger than his superstitious reverence for his own inspiration is his hot yearning to make someone jump. He has an ineradicable taste for cruelty in him; he is a sportsman even before he is an exegete and moralist, and very often his blood lust leads him into lamentable excesses. The various vice crusades offer innumerable cases in point. In one city, if the press dispatches are to be believed, the proscribed women of the Tenderloin were pursued with such ferocity that seven of them were driven to suicide. And in another city, after a campaign of repression so unfortunate in its effects that it was actually denounced by clergymen elsewhere, a distinguished (and very friendly) connoisseur of such affairs referred to it ingenuously as "more fun than a fleet of airships."

Such disorderly and pharisaical combats with evil, of course, produce nothing but more evil. It is a common-

place, indeed, that a city is always in worse condition after it has been "cleaned up" by Puritans than it was before. New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Des Moines offer evidence as to the social evil, and Savannah, Atlanta and Charleston, S. C., as to the saloon. Four or five years after Los Angeles had been made chemically pure by police-women, searchlights and an incomparable spy system, it was discovered that the city harbored houses of vice so unutterably vile that even Port Said would have been ashamed of them. And in Des Moines, to take but one other example, the enforcement of the so-called Iowa Red Light Law led to such a saturnalia of sex that even the army surgeon at Fort Des Moines was staggered. But the Puritans who finance these enterprises are not daunted by untoward results. They get their thrills, not out of any possible obliteration of vice, but out of the galloping pursuit of the vicious. There is fair reason for assuming, indeed, that they would oppose any scheme of hunting which promised to exterminate the game. In all the "dry" States they have left loopholes for the speakeasy, and when the Webb Law stopped those loopholes, they promptly made new ones. The thing that gives them pleasure is to spy out, track down and apply the switch to a sinner—preferably an attractive *fille de joie*, but failing that, a gambler, a bootlegger, a Sabbath breaker or a turkey trotter. Their ideal quarry is the white slave trader, who is four-fifths a myth and hence not permanently crippled by their artillery. They can kill him all over again once a week.

Naturally enough, this organization of Puritanism upon the scale and basis of baseball, racing and vaudeville has tended to attract and create a type of "expert" crusader whose determination to give his employers a good run for their money is uncontaminated by any consideration for the public welfare. The result has been a steady increase of scandals, a constant collapse of moral organization, a frequent unveiling of whitened sepulchres. Various observers have sought, of late, to direct the public

attention to this significant and inevitable corruption of the new Puritanism. On May 8 last the New York *Sun*, in the course of a protest against the appointment of a vice commission for New York, denounced the paid agents of private Puritan organizations as "notoriously corrupt, undependable and dishonest," and three days later the Rev. W. S. Rainsford, in a letter to the same paper, bore testimony, out of his abundant experience, to their lawlessness, their absurd pretensions to special knowledge, their questionable methods of gathering evidence and their devious devices for forestalling honest criticism. A few months later the Baltimore grand jury made somewhat similar accusations against certain agents of the local vice society—a society chiefly managed, curiously enough, by a former Attorney General of the United States. Proofs have been added to such accusations more than once. In fully a score of cities the agents of vice societies have come to grief for violating the very laws they profess to enforce. And the other Puritan brotherhoods, notably the Anti-Saloon League, have nourished plentiful tribes of bogus Puritans, some of whom have gone over to the opposition, and are now serving the hosts of darkness as gallantly as they once served the angels.

But does all this raise a public row? Do the American people show any sign of putting down this debauch of sham virtue, this orgy of snouting and quackery? Alas, I am unable to report that they do. A few courageous critics mount the rostrum to protest—Rainsford, Brand Whitlock, Carter Harrison, the late Mayor Gaynor, Father Russell in Washington. But the majority of Americans get too much fun out of the show to spoil it. It costs them nothing: all of the bills are paid by a small group of opulent saints. The average vice society is supported by half a dozen men. And say what you will against these bondholders of Heaven, they at least offer good sport to the populace here on earth. They keep the newspapers supplied with hot stuff. They dramatize the dullness of everyday.

ACCIDENT WARD II

By Albert Payson Terhune

Raegan, who tells this story, is an underworld philosopher with a penetrating vision into the motives of unconventional life. He is a racy, picturesque character full of the juices of humanity; and his point of view, although original, has much truth as its basis. This is the sixth of the Raegan stories, whose unusualness of theme and vividness of narrative power have made them one of the most talked-of series ever run by this magazine.

THE hospital blotter named his malady "Abrasions and contusions about the head and body." His lawyer, in the subsequent damage suit complaint, mentioned the abrasions and contusions, and added: "Mental and physical anguish."

Raegan himself diagnosed the injury more colloquially when I went to see him in Accident Ward II.

"My paint's scratched," he said, "but I guess my cylinders are all right."

I was paying Raegan one of those nightmare hospital visits, wherein the caller sits in embarrassed misery on the edge of a hard chair, amid glaring white-and-iron surroundings; breathing iodoform and carbolic and breaking in upon the needful repose of an invalid who hates to be stirred up and made to talk.

I found myself surreptitiously trying to take my own pulse by means of my neck throbs—an accomplishment held over from fight refereeing days—and fell to wondering morbidly if the triple screen around the cot at the far end of the ward was there because the patient was dead or only because he was having a bath.

Raegan had thus far gleaned as scant joyance from my duty visit as had I. Chiefly because his accident—in a moment of mental exhilaration he had tried to defy the laws of probability by falling down in front of a speeding motor

bus with a view to stopping it—had left him too weak and shaky to take his wonted pleasure in monologues or in argument.

Wherefore, we ransacked our intellects in vain for talk themes. And I began a speculation on how soon I might decently leave him, in face of the nurse's queer welcoming fiat: "Let him talk all he wants to. And stay as long as you like. It will do him good. He's getting too restless."

Having ravished the commonplace, and goaded an iodoform-steeped brain for something that might arouse Raegan's interest, I chanced to notice the paper-covered book that sprawled open on the stand beside his cot. I read the title in some astonishment.

The book was Murger's "*Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*." In English, of course. An execrable translation; with the hospital library mark on its back and an iodine stain on the title page. It seemed strange mental food for a man whose literary tastes, as I knew them, ran chiefly to sporting pages and to *indices expurgatorii*. I said so.

"Oh, that?" he answered. "I'm not getting much forwarder in it. It doesn't make any special hit with me. I just asked for it today because I happened to read part of it one dull night five years ago when I was an orderly here. And I've been puzzling off and on, ever

since, how the story came out. But since I've got it I don't seem to care so much. It's funny how—"

"An orderly here!" I repeated; though I ought to have been prepared by this time to hear of the protean Raegan's presence in any walk of life. "An orderly!"

"For a couple of months," he confessed. "You see, I was lying dark. And a hospital's the best place on earth to do that. If you're well. A Board of Health friend of mine got me the berth. But somehow I didn't last. The Chief forgot himself one day and said I had the manners of a typhoid convalescent and the morals of a trained nurse, and that if I didn't get out within five minutes he'd have me arrested and my trunk searched. I wouldn't let any living man talk to me like that. It hurt my feelings; so I resigned on the spot."

"And I never gave him the satisfaction of setting foot in here again till they carried me in, feet foremost, last week. Hospitals, as pleasure resorts, aren't all they're cracked up to be. This Murger person," tapping the book's grimy cover, "knew all about 'em; judging from one or two of the chapters here. But if I'd met him I could have given him stuff for a dozen more hospital and so-called 'underworld' chapters. Why, Lois Pfister's case alone would have been enough for one. It was a bit like parts of Murger's yarn, too, Lois's case was."

The burden of entertainment tumbled from me like a robe; and the merest mouthful of questions sufficed to make Raegan drape it right blithely around his own hollow shoulders. How much of the tale was cold fact and how much inspired by Bowdlerized Murger there is no profit in asking.

First time I cut Lois's trail (began Raegan) was in this very ward. She'd tried the river route to glory and hit her head on a stringpiece. It seemed a shame that a measly joist of timber should knock out such a perfectly good trip. So I grew sort of interested and I asked her some questions. I got the story. Some of it from her. Some from

Chrystie. Some from the blotter, later on, and from an interne who had the words habit when he was drunk.

Lois was emergency girl on the house furnishing floor at Skeecy's. That means she had to act as understudy—"relief" they call it—at any counter on the floor; "spell" the lunch hour girls; take the place of the sick ones; carry in her head the run of eleven different sets of stock, and average two hours' more steady work a day than the other girls; not to speak of overtime in the holiday and stocktaking seasons and double duty in the slack months when the store was kept shorthanded.

And because she was the very best "emergency" that Skeecy's had ever hired, she earned \$47.75 a week. Of which she received \$7.50. The remaining \$40.25 going toward getting the Skeecy daughters snubbed by sassiety and warding off the stigma of "piker" from the Skeecy son.

I've read a lot of testimony on "minimum wage," written by people who play their wealth of ignorance against their desire to butt in, and who break even. But the bulk of inspired ignorance agrees that a working goil can scramble along on seven fifty per, without having to be a looker, too. (On seven dollars, no. On seven fifty, yes. Fifty cents serving as virtue's shining rampart.)

Lois Pfister could have lived on either sum; or maybe on less. But Allen Chrystie couldn't. And as for the two of 'em living on it . . .

Who was Allen Chrystie? He wasn't much of anyone—except to Lois. He had been one of the Skeecy bookkeepers, till he was fired for drinking. Not that he drank to excess. (I've known him to be sober for days at a time.) But big store employees are supposed to supply their own incompetence without the help of booze. So Chrystie lost out.

At the time he was fired he and Lois were engaged. But they couldn't marry on her seven dollars and a half and on his danger of getting another job wished on him if he wasn't careful. So—maybe *they'd* read this Bohemian stuff, too. For they started a Rodolphe-Mimi

romance in a tenement where foolish questions weren't asked.

Now, that's the time when they ought to have strolled on spring evenings under the budding horsechestnuts in the Luxembourg Gardens where the first black-bird warbles, and gone to stoddent dances at the Boul' Mich' (whatever that is); and had gay parties where they burned chairs and drama manuscripts for firewood; and borrowed fifteen francs from a rich uncle who ran a toy shop in the Ruelle Something-or-Other; and then gotten a thousand louis for writing a play and spent it all in seventeen days on a dress for Mimi—I mean Lois.

But in New York that game works with the reverse English. Rivington Street isn't the Rue de Dragon, and Murphy isn't Murger.

So the seven fifty per went for rent and food. As far as it would. When it stopped through debility and the hundred and four dollars Lois had saved stopped, too—why, it seemed to be up to Chrystie to think about a job. Even Lois hinted that; very gentle and tactful.

It was then that Chrystie developed lungs. Lungs with a cough in 'em. The doctor said he must avoid indoor work like he'd avoid leprosy, and that the rigors of outdoor work would kill him in a month. Chrystie told Lois so, himself. Repeated the doctor's very words. He even repeated the doctor's name. It was no name Lois had ever happened to hear of; she not being up in mind reading.

But it scared her, something terrible. That day she got her first calldown at Skeecey's. Bad lungs mean Arizona or Saranac or some other health teasing place; and the right food and outdoors and loafing. They mean pretty much anything, in fact, except a tenement room and a reversionary interest in seven fifty per.

It was figuring those facts out that got Lois her calldown. And try as she would, she couldn't find the answer. Not till Daddy Fogel came cruising along in the offing about closing time. Fogel was the assistant treasurer at Skeecey's. He was a money handler of the old school, with broadcloth clothes,

and with all of his facial tract south of the meridian under luxuriant cultivation. He still had a clear title to the first dollar he'd ever earned.

Fogel had been casting a fatherly eye on Lois for a couple of months or more. She and Chrystie used to laugh about it—in the days when they had still laughed. But now when Lois looked at Fogel she saw the Answer. So when he came loping along the aisle she didn't shy, but shut her teeth and hung a smile in front of her and waited.

"It's been a trying day," says Fogel, by way of sparkling small talk.

"It has," she repartees, throwing in a look to add good measure to the smile. "One of those days nobody wants. You're the first bright spot in it, Colonel Fogel."

(Daddy Fogel had been "Colonel" ever since he was elected to a lieutenantcy in the Third Gatling Battery in Williamsburg, back in 1889. He loved the title dearly. But no one who didn't want something from him pretty badly ever used it.)

Now this line of talk from a girl who'd always run mewing up a tree whenever he came in sight didn't do a thing to Fogel but throw him into a light perspiration and set his gray whiskers to crackling. For the first time in years he could think of more glowing ways to spend his surplus pay that week than by turning it into the Building and Loan Association.

It's this way, I find: Up to thirty-five or so, a man can win the love game with any of a dozen cards; but mostly by youth. From then on to fifty he has to count on magnetism, brains, experience and the winning stunts that he's made a life study of. These help make up for the absence of the youth card. Sometimes.

But after he's passed fifty, he hasn't but one card left in his hand. And that one is money. Satan help the after-fifty Lothario who has no cash!

For ten minutes Daddy Fogel and Lois chatted there in the aisle while the home-going clerks nudged each other and whispered kind words. By the end of that time Lois had driven a bar-

gain. The first of her wabbly career. A bargain that would do a whole lot toward patching up those bum lungs that Allen Chrystie didn't have.

Queerly enough, Lois had never thought of that way out before. A vice reformer or any student of the minimum wage problem would have had it all figured in advance. But Lois hadn't. Few shopgirls have. The homely ones know, or ought to know, that they couldn't clear two dollars a week that way. And the pretty and clever ones can make more on the stage or by marrying. Yes, son, the minimum wage has about as much to do with virtue as its lecturers have to do with horse sense.

Lois sent a note to Chrystie that she was kept overtime at the store that evening. She and Daddy Fogel went to a private room dinner at a hotel that the unregenerate head floorwalker had once happened to mention to the Colonel.

And just forty seconds after they were inside, the place was raided. Talk about the hoodoo bird!

And then that scare-bitten old fool of a Fogel makes the star blunder of his existence. After first threatening to get the cops all broke (Never do that, friend; it's the very worst play to make!), he announced that he and Lois were just there as an investigating committee, studying vice conditions for the Reform League.

That finished them both. All the hotel's other hope-deferred guests were turned loose. Fogel and Lois were held for Special Sessions on a prize package assortment of charges, ranging from "material witnesses" to "disorderly characters." Police and magistrate soaked it to them; having been tripped up too many times by the league not to feel pleased as Punch over this chance to get back.

They asked Lois's name; and she gave it and her address as simply as if she'd been asked by the census catcher. She was new to the game. So was Fogel. He was so new to it that he said he was John Smith; till Lois, thinking the shock had unhinged his memory, corrected him and told the reporters all

about it. There was a cute little story in most of the papers next day; partly because Fogel had broken his umbrella on one reporter.

Daddy Fogel got bail that same night. Lois didn't. It was pretty near a week before they let her out. And then only because the man who ran the hotel was able to quash the complaint against himself or pigeonhole it or something else that cash and pull can work. Otherwise Lois might still be in the coop or in the Detention.

Back she hustled at top speed to Chrystie; scared to death for fear his lungs had collapsed through worry over her. But Chrystie'd not only read the papers but he'd gotten the jovial ha-ha from most of the men who still associated with him. You can guess the kind of a welcome he dished out to Lois. He'd had a week to rehearse it.

She was all the things he'd thought of and a few more that came to him impromptu while he was talking. She was vile and she had betrayed his honest love and his simple faith. Not content with the poor home he had given her—the home he'd tried so hard to make happy for her and that he'd smashed his health in providing—she had cast him aside like an old glove. For a richer man. She had sold herself. She was worse than that Millie Oske who used to work at Skeezy's and who . . .

Oh, what's the use of going on with his rotten drivel? Figure out for yourself what a swine of that kind would revamp from the Hazel Kirke plays and from his own imagination. He thundered it at her, stalking back and forth with one hand grabbing his throat and the other doing double duty for gestures.

And Lois? Why, she just stood, half in and half out of the door, and looked at him with her eyes big and her pretty jaw slacked. He'd opened on her as soon as she hove in sight, and it wasn't till he stopped a second for breath, some eight minutes later, that she could get in a word. And then she asks all eager (the explaining could wait):

"You haven't had another hemorrhage, have you, dear, while I was gone?"

Up goes Chrystie in the air at that;

though now he remembered to grease his speech with some hollow coughs.

"You haven't even the grace to be ashamed!" he roars. "You're hardened and degraded through and through. Serves me right for stooping to a gutter-snipe. Get out of this room, you! And don't you ever set foot in here again, or I'll call a cop and have you chucked in the street where you belong."

He emphasizes it by giving her a shove and slamming the door in her face. Lois just squunched up in a sobby little heap in the black hallway; whimpering to him to take her back; and remembering how brave and manly he'd looked when he ordered her out of her own room; and praying that all the excitement wouldn't set his poor lungs to bleeding again.

But the only answer she gets is a relentless cough once in a while. By and by, it dawns on her that he's really kicked her out and he's done with her. So she goes very quietly and meekly down to the river and steps off the end of the dock.

It's dark, so she doesn't know there's a jetty three feet above tidewater. She lands on the jetty, with her head clicking against the stringpiece. A kid tells a harness bull about it and an ambulance call is turned in, and Lois is carted here with concussion of the brain.

Now don't go running loose with the idea that divine forgiveness is confined to women. It ain't. Men can be every speck as noble and forgiving as any woman that ever happened. Allen Chrystie proved that. As soon as he reads in the paper that Lois had been taken to the hospital, he pikes around there and forgives her on the spot. Gee, but it was fine to see him do it!

And I can still laugh myself quite sick by remembering how silly she looked; with her tired little bruised arms hanging tight around him and her tear-smudged face jammed, sniffling, into the hollow of his neck; while she kept patting the back of his shoulders, where her hands met, all timid and apologetic and grateful.

Son, I sure admired Chrystie for being that magnanimous to a sinning woman.

And I'd hate like blazes to think that it had anything on earth to do with the fact that the landlord had told him he must get out next day unless the rent was paid; or that a new wage-earnerette he'd been smiling on had passed him up in favor of a chap with a job.

Chrystie takes Lois back, and they pawn her Sacred Heart cross to square the landlord and buy a reconciliation feast. That's a Murger touch for you, anyhow. Next day Lois reports for duty again at Skeezy's; and she gets about the same cordial reception there that would be handed to a polecat at the front door of a summer hotel. She's three blocks away from the store and still traveling strong when she gets her breath and begins to realize she's canned.

The news that she's lost her job gives Chrystie one of his terrible sinking spells. At such times a piece of good luck always does him a world of good. So Lois goes straight off on a round of the stores. But there's a kind of freemasonry and underground telegraph, I hear, among such places. And the story had gotten around. Nobody wanted her. Except one fire sale emporium on Canal Street, whose proprietor got his pudgy face slapped for suggesting himself as Daddy Fogel's successor.

But after three days of job hunting (and Chrystie's cough getting worse every day till it was real pitiful; and everything pawnable pawned), she went back to the Canal Street guy and begged his pardon for being so rude. And Chrystie had porter and nice strengthening tenderloin steak for his supper and a ride in a park phaeton in the afternoon.

Lois told him she'd got a job. And she had. It must 'a' been at fair wages, too; for she never hinted any more that he'd best look for light work, and she began to lay by a little each week to send him to Saranac in the spring.

But Chrystie never got to Lungland. At least, not on Lois Pfister's cash. He came to us instead.

He found the time hang heavy on his hands while Lois was away working. And he tried to lighten it. But he tried it with a girl who had a Dago sweetheart. And the Dago sweetheart put a hole in

Chrystie's back with a knife that had started life as a file. 'Way in, the knife went. And at last Chrystie *did* come near having something the matter with his lungs.

Lois was here every single day to see him, and she stayed until she was scatted out. She said she was his wife. So one of the internes—Morrison, it was—fixed a way for her to dodge the "visiting days" rule; and let her be here as much as she liked.

But when she reached the ward, the fourth morning, Morrison met her and wouldn't let her in. He was a bit woozy from a nurses'-doctors' jamboree the staff had had the night before. But he was sober enough to tell her that poor Chrystie had wound up his accounts three hours earlier.

Morrison was nice and sympathetic and broke it to her easy; for all he had such a racking head and heavy-sea stomach. He had just come on duty and he had read the report of Chrystie's death on the hospital register. He'd hung around the entrance of the ward on purpose to make it as easy for Lois as he could and soften the shock. We all liked her a lot.

Lois didn't wait for him to finish the sympathy spiel he'd framed. She just stared at him a second, all blank. Then she ran out.

She scuttled along the streets, mumbly to herself and wondering why she couldn't remember how to cry. Once a man stopped her and said something. She didn't get the words, but the eyes were enough. She laughed in his face, all loud and high. And he dropped her arm as if it had bit him. She got back somehow to her room. And there she stayed for three days, sitting in one place mostly and looking at the wall and trying to make her mind get back onto the rails.

By and by she got hold of her senses a little, and she realized she had never gone to see Chrystie once before they took him away; or done anything to keep him out of the Potter's Field.

Back she came here on the run, taking a chance that it mightn't be too late. She didn't know whether she'd been

away an hour or a year. And she collides with Morrison in the front hall.

"Oh, Mrs. Chrystie!" he gasps. "I've been looking all over for you. They must have got your address wrong on the blotter, because the janitor told me no Mrs. Chrystie lived there. I—"

"Is it too late now?" she asks. "I can raise money somehow to—"

"Too late?" he sings out. "No! Your husband's alive!"

Then all at once Lois remembers how to cry—and how to faint, too. When she comes to herself she tries to listen to two nurses and me explaining to her how the whole thing was a mixup caused by Morrison's having misread the list of removals from Accident Ward I to Accident Ward II, for the death list; he having been too orey-eyed that morning to read his own name straight. Chrystie had been moved to Ward II the night before that, because he was convalescing so fast.

"He's been fretting his heart out for you, Mrs. Chrystie," gushes one of the nurses, "thinking you were ill or—"

"He has not," says I, with an idea of tossing a little sanity into the scene. "He's been swearing a blue streak at you because he thinks you've shaken him for some real man. He says this time he'll never forgive you—whatever he may mean by 'this time.'"

Both the nurses glares at me like cats with water thrown on 'em. Morrison sidwipes me, unostentatious, in the small of the back; and digs his heel soothingly into the top of my instep. Then, to cover up my boorishness, he says real cheerful:

"We can guarantee his recovery now, Mrs. Chrystie. He's on the fine old straight road. Another fortnight will see him as good as new. But," he blithers on, proceeding to make my break look like Seven Rules for Perfect Tact, "he'd never have gotten over that wound so easily if he hadn't had the strongest lungs this side of the brass foundry."

"No!" bleats Lois, trying to stand up and getting her voice at last. "No. You're wrong, Doctor. Allen's lungs—"

"Allen's lungs," says Morrison, with

his best dispensary breeziness, "are as sound as a dollar. Not a flaw in 'em. I ought to know. I've tapped him all over. And Dr. B—" (the best lung man in America, and one that even Lois had to know about from reading the papers) "examined him only yesterday. He says your husband has one of the six sets of perfect lungs he's found so far in New York. And now, if you're strong enough, I'll go in and prepare him for your coming. I don't want to risk a shock while he's doing so splendidly."

But when Morrison came back a couple of minutes later to conduct Lois to her brevet spouse, she wasn't anywhere in sight. And, what's more, she never showed up there again. It sure was a mystery. They still babble about it here; and they've come to the belief now that the great joy queered her brain and sent her rambling aimlessly—maybe into some horrible awful white slaver's lair; never to emerge alive.

It was a tragedy, too, as well as a mystery. For when Allen Chrystie came out of the hospital he had to go to work. To hear him talk about that ungrateful minx would make the Sherman equestrian statue shed tears—horse, general and angel, all three. I hate to have my emotions stirred up. So I dropped Chrystie's acquaintance as quick as he'd let me. And to make sure he wouldn't come around and harrow me up again, I forced myself, real reluctant, to pick a quarrel with him and give him the licking of his life, when we parted.

One day, a couple of years later, I ran over to Philadelphia on business. My collar got wilted, and I went into a department store to sign a contract for a new one. While the clerk was waiting on me I asked him who a girl was, in

charge of another counter, about three miles off, down the store. He said her name was Beglin—Alice Beglin—and that she'd come there, quite a while before, as stock girl. It had been a busy season, and they'd taken her on with no recommendation but her landlady's. She was smart as a whip and an ox for work. And she'd hammered her way right up to a twelve-dollar job.

"But don't go trying to get next," he warns me. "She's a man hater. I don't believe that girl ever spoke three words to a man in her life."

"Well," I comes back, "she won't get the chance to build up her vocabulary on me."

And I got out of the place as if the bulls were after me; with my face tucked inside my hat.

"How do I dope it up?" finished Raegan, lighting, under the covers, a cigarette I had smuggled in to him. "I don't. Abe Lincoln's 'can't fool all the people all the time' may cover it. And then again it mayn't. I don't think it does. The inspired slogan, 'Women is Women,' seems to me to hit a good deal closer to it. That's the only answer I can think of to explain why Lois Pfister worked and went to hell and tried to kill herself for a man she knew was three degrees worse than worthless, and broke her heart because she thought he was dead—and then threw him down cold as soon as she found he hadn't a mortal disease. Likewise, if you want one breed of woman to keep on loving you in spite of anything you may do to queer yourself, get sick."

"And I think—but then again I don't know. Maybe—oh, 'Women is Women' is near enough! Let it go at that."



THE finger of suspicion generally wears a wedding ring.

THE BILLIARD PLAYERS

By Edwin Davies Schoonmaker

ARE ye the strenuous souls of other lives,
The swords of Cæsar and of Tamerlane
Here sheathed until the conqueror comes again?
Or tired workers out of ancient hives
That drone here till another Spring arrives
And blows her scented trumpet from the plain?
Or, lusty palace fellows, did ye drain
Life's flowing cup among a hundred wives?

Rest, for ye know not when the rising sun
Will wake the page's voice, or lands unseen
With whistle call you to the toiler's fate;
Rest and make smoke and drink oblivion
Save to the duel on the embattled green—
Mark the long lances while the armies wait!



GIFTS

By Mary Arnold Lewisohn

WHAT shall it profit any man to waste
The quiet midnight in the quest of her
Who mocks us with a longing bitterer
Than frustrate love's. For the lean years, swift-paced,
Shall tread him under, and fame's shadow, chased
To the door of death, shall flee him, charier
Of gifts than death. Bring cerecloth and sharp myrrh,
And carve the scroll, and see the marble placed:

"Here lies a man. He took unto his heart
The harlot Fame, who slew him though he gave
All of himself he deemed the nobler part;
The loudest name that it is hers to keep
Falls into idle rumor here. The grave
Is kinder to him. It has given sleep."

BATTLE

By Donn Byrne

HE knew somehow that if he could spit it would relieve the terrible pressure on his chest. He tried to again and again, but all he produced was a dry rattle in his throat that terrified him.

The line had stopped advancing on the crest of the hill and the men were lying flat on their stomachs hidden in the grass. They had only ceased their advance about ten minutes, but he could not remember when they had moved. Every moment seemed a definite life marked off from each other life. He wondered if he were dying without having been touched.

Behind the line in the valley the battery was being lugged into position. The grunts of the gunners and the oaths of the officers could be heard distinctly. He felt that if they fired he would scream aloud.

The line had raised themselves on their elbows and begun firing. He had heard no orders. The cracks of the rifles aroused him. He could see the black specks in the grass opposite. Occasionally he could see two or three black pygmies flit in and out of a clump of trees in the distance. He was afraid to rise on his elbows. He closed his eyes and began firing spasmodically.

Then there came a noise like a wind passing through telegraph wires. Behind him the grunts of the gunners and the officers' fierce shouting had stopped. There was a roar and a shriek, and a shell passed over his head toward the black figures opposite. It hung over the clump of trees and burst in a scarlet blotch.

The sight of the red explosion made him violently sick. He found himself

vomiting. He had had enough. He was dying. There was a sound like a stick slapping a carpet, and Left File coughed and laid down his rifle.

He began whimpering. Right File suddenly smashed him in the ribs with the butt of his gun. "Shoot, you damned idiot!" he shouted.

Yes, that was it. Shoot! If he could only kill all the black specks opposite the fight would be over and he would be safe. He took a clip from his belt, but his fingers fumbled and the cartridges spilled out.

The range finder had got his distance and shells were falling all over the clump of trees and the black specks in the distance. The line ceased firing. He had not heard the whistle. "Hey, you, Skinny, cut it out!" shouted Right File. Then the butt came into play.

A kind of calm came over him, and he looked around. The officer on the end of the file was telephoning. Good God—telephoning! This was no place to telephone. The right place to telephone was in an office, sitting at a desk, or in a glass booth in a drug store. But on a battlefield!

And then the sun was shining. It should rain on a battlefield. And a crow began flying across the space between the opposing lines. Hadn't the crow more sense than that?

The whistle blew again. The officer at the end of the line was standing up. His arm went out like a semaphore. The column scrambled to its feet and rushed forward.

They had made barely fifty yards with the first advance, but against that pelting storm of lead it seemed an endless road. He ran forward crouching

with the column. It occurred to him to lie down and sham dead. But then Left File was lying down when the bullet struck him. Whatever protection there was on the field lay with the advancing line. Good God! He mustn't be left behind.

The line dropped again and began firing. He noticed for the first time the spire of a little church in the distance, and as he looked the spire disappeared in a cloud of dust. Through the whistle of the bullets and the shriek of the shrapnel and the boom of the heavy ordnance he could distinguish the last brazen clang of the stricken bell.

He thought of the ruin of the church as some horrible blasphemy, and half expected Christ to appear and smite the opposing line. The withering fire continued. Up the line a man shrieked, and sprang to his feet, and clawed the air and fell in a horrible sprawl.

He caught a glimpse of his knees. The little flint stones of the field had pierced his khaki puttees and they were stained a dark red. "Oh, God, I wish I was at home," he whined.

Right File had no time for him now. Right File was firing hysterically and shoving clips into his magazine, and cursing and babbling.

He heard a whir like the noise the air fan in his office made. An aeroplane passed high over his head reconnoitering the enemy's position. The tripod guns in the woods were trained on it immediately and their shells broke in midair. The machine circled and flew back over the heads of the line. It made a sound like a sewing machine. He thought of his married sister at home making baby clothes in the kitchen.

Another rush. The line made over a hundred yards. He was still there.

This time he found himself near the machine gun. It made a sound as of a stick run along wooden palings. Then it coughed and rattled. The man at the hopper sprang up and began cursing and kicking the wheels. The man at the crank lay across the cylinder and sobbed.

He was collecting his wits now. He waited for the guns behind to cease firing. Then he knew they must rush.

He looked around and saw the new Left File. He recognized him and nodded. He didn't care for the new one. The old one and he had been rather thick. They had shown each other photos of their lady friends, and had exchanged obscene reminiscences in camp. He got a touch of the old panic when he thought of him lying some hundred yards behind.

The whistle had blown to cease firing. The new Left File put his hand in his shirt pocket and took out a bag of tobacco and a packet of papers and began rolling a cigarette.

The whistle blew. They made another hundred yards in the advance. They were so near that he could see the pin points of flame from the rifles in the woods. They looked like the first flare of a match or the glow of a cigarette butt.

"Ought to make them woods in another rush," said Left File.

He raised his tongue to moisten the roof of his mouth, but it stuck.

"That's if they don't give us the knife," added Left File.

With a tremendous effort he tore his tongue back to its place.

"The knife?" he muttered thickly.

"Yeh, the knife, the cleaver, the cut-throat's friend, the bayonet."

The bayonet! He thought of the long glistening blade rushing toward him, of the sweating red face behind it, of the vicious drive into throat or chest or entrails, of the heavy boots trampling over his face. He fancied he could catch a glint of steel in the woods opposite. He felt the cold sweat break along his ribs. Good God, he had once seen a cow cut up—

He gripped his rifle and fumbled for the trigger. The bullet smashed in his face.

Left File turned and looked. The cigarette dropped from his mouth. "What do you know about that?" he said. "What the hell do you know about that?"

And as he spoke, the column sprang to its feet and made its final rush. The opposing line broke and scampered like rabbits.

REMEMBERED?

By Charles Vale

I FORGET the name of the street. It is curious how these details slip from the memory as the years go by and later incidents come crowding into life. And yet it is not strange that one should forget, after all. It occurs to me that perhaps I never knew the name—never actually saw it or heard it, or, at least, gave it any attention. For I used to go down to the water always by night, and there were few lights, as there were few buildings. It was not really a street, anyway: just a lane, winding narrowly to the river, with a small school at the mid-distance and the big house at the bottom, looking out over the muddy water to the other side. Yet in the moonlight or the starlight the drab tide with its floating debris passed by like a silver flood, and the factories and grimy houses on the opposite bank were softened and transfigured. If one had lived in the big house and looked out only in the nighttime, one could have sensed the glamour of the great city without the griminess.

Well, that is the best way to make friends with the capitals of the old world—in the darkness or the semi-darkness, when you don't see the drab dreariness that is thrust at you in the sunshine; when the mere bulk of things looms without tawdriness through the spaces that the stars pick out. There are whole sections of London that I could walk through blindfold at night; streets that are nameless to me, though I know them from end to end and could number the houses; streets that lose themselves in small squares and circles, or bring you up suddenly to a blank wall, or a church perhaps, and no way past it, though the city glimmers about

you on every side. But I could not give you the names of these places—the names you will find in the city maps. I could not lead you through them in the daylight. I should be lost. They are familiar to me only in the darkness, or beneath the flickering of the lit lamps and the stars.

But this by the way. I am rambling as I tell my story. Yet that is how it came to me—in fragments, disconnected, slowly pieced together as the meaning became clear. First, there was the house. I had seen it repeatedly, with a light here and there through the windows, as I stood by the small inlet at the bottom of the lane. I have stood there often, with the river at my feet—the stars of the heavens reflected in the impure waters. There was Doulton's factory away to the left, at Lambeth, and scores of unidentified buildings. One imagined the rovers of early days sweeping up the river and finding, in place of the once green vistas, these stark industrial fabrics. Well, times have changed since the Danes went roving. The ghosts of the Vikings would not know the places that they harried.

And one would turn from the river and look back toward Chelsea or Fulham; and there, at one's elbow, was the house, with the high wall round it and the gardens hidden: a bit of the past still sticking in the mud of so-called progress—a reminder of the times when London was a city, not a sprawling hive for millions of human ants; when there were open spaces and a smokeless sky not far from the Strand; when Fulham was a village and Wimbledon away in the wilds—a safe hunting ground for the knights of the road. And here, out of

the new turmoil of the city that had eaten up fields and villages and towns, was the house that had been a country residence two centuries ago—a big, gray stone, formless place, with a brick wall added when the human tide came nearer.

II

I SAW him first one night in November. There had been a heavy fog during the day, dull yellow, with the smell of soot in it. All traffic, of course, had been disorganized. The horse buses—it was before they had been driven out by the rumbling, shaking motor stages—crawled along in processions of six or seven, the conductor of the first leading with a lamp, and the drivers of the others jesting or swearing as they felt their way. Here and there a hansom, with bells jingling, chanced its luck in the middle of the road. Lights were lit in the shop windows, but made little impression on that blanket of gloom.

A dreary, dispiriting day. But the fog lifted gradually as the night came on and a slight wind blew from the north. The buses began to move at a trot; pedestrians could see their way for a few yards forward; the street lamps seemed to link themselves together into the beginning of a row, instead of reaching out to you individually as you came nearer, each an isolated glimmer shut in by the fog. The lights in the shops were more cheerful.

I had been out once or twice for brief moments; but it was about ten o'clock before I started for my usual ramble: first to Putney bridge and then back over the ugly iron railway bridge and past Hurlingham to the water front. For perhaps a quarter of an hour I stood in the little cove at the bottom of the lane, watching the lights on the moored river craft—coal barges and what not, ugly enough in the daytime, but redeemed by the darkness. The tide with its debris struggled sluggishly back, just at the ebb; but began to flow more swiftly as I turned away. And there, at my elbow, was Andrews.

He was a man of middle height, with

extraordinarily bushy eyebrows and weak, pale eyes—blue-gray-green, a nondescript shade. I had seen him before once or twice; had bought odd trifles from him in his jewelry store in the Fulham Road, near Walham Green. But for the moment, though I half recognized him, I could not place him.

"A fine night," he said. "A fine, dull night."

"You like it?" I asked.

"I like that curious buried feeling when the fog's in the air. I like the smell of the river and the mud of the river and the sullen secretiveness of it, as it goes its dirty way to the great ships in the docks and out to the sea beyond. Think of the filth it carries with it, and the treasures buried in the ooze, and the dead bodies with white faces that have drifted with the tide."

I had placed him by now; remembered him behind the counter of his shop, with the pale eyes peering at a tray of trinkets.

"You take rather a foggy view of life, Mr. Andrews," I said.

He shook his head.

"Do you think so?" he asked. "It hadn't occurred to me in that way. But it's cold and damp. I feel the dampness. Are you walking back?"

I told him frankly that I liked to walk alone; that my walks were a part of my business.

"That's all right," he said. "I won't intrude. It's not my way." He turned and stood for a minute, looking at the big house.

"There'll be changes soon," he said.

"In what way?" I asked.

"Didn't you hear they're giving it up?" he said. "It's for sale. Everything as it stands—house, furniture and grounds."

"I don't know anything about it," I said. "I haven't even the faintest idea whom it belongs to."

"No?" he said. "I should have thought you'd have picked that up. It's a part of the local history, you see. Always been in the same family. Why, that house was looking over the river when it was all fields hereaway. When linkboys used to light my lady to her carriage. When Fulham was sort of

lonely, waiting for the city to stretch out and gather it in. But there's always been a Cranston in that house, since it was built. And now they're giving it up."

"Why?" I asked.

"You don't seem to know what's happening round you," he said. "Sir John died last month, and there's only his mother and sister left. I suppose they're tired of the place. Don't like the view, perhaps. But it'd just suit me. I've a sort of feeling— But there, what's the good of talking about it?"

"Go on," I said.

But he shook his head, said good night and went away.

It was a week later, I think, before I saw him again; and then, for several nights, we seemed to meet regularly in the little cove. He did not talk much after that first time; just a sentence now and then, or perhaps two or three strung together, and silence afterward. But he would stand looking at the house, with his eyebrows twisted, as if he were trying to read some perplexing riddle.

"It draws me," he said once. "I don't know why. But I seem to belong. That's the only way I can put it. Ever felt like that?"

"Like going home?" I asked.

"That's it. Like going home. You'll think me foolish," he said. "But I can't shake off the feeling that I've been there before. Long ago. Of course it's absurd. Never been inside the grounds. But there you are. There's no accounting for these odd impressions. After all, it's strange we don't have more of them. We come and go. Where from—and where are we going? Life's a mighty peculiar thing, and you can't measure it by rule of thumb. Now that river—I've watched it till I was dizzy. Why? There's nothing in just looking at the dirty water. But it makes me think. Build pictures. See things. I tell you, it's like going back to another life." He laughed. "Me, with the little drab years tucked away, and never a glimpse of romance anywhere in sight. Ten hours behind a counter, day in and day out, with 'Thank you, sir,' and

'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir.' That's not the stuff that dreams are made of, eh?"

"I'm not sure," I said. A flash had come from the pale eyes; the lips were stronger, the face somehow different. "It isn't necessary to use an automobile to run down romance."

But he had finished talking for the evening, and soon went away.

A week later, I saw in the local paper that Mr. John Andrews, of Fulham, had purchased Cranston House by private treaty. The price was not named. I was a little astonished to find that the old jeweler had saved enough for such an investment. Evidently there was profit, if no romance, in those ten hours behind a counter, day in and day out.

III

No alterations were made to the house. He just moved in as if he had been away for a vacation and had come home again, tired of wandering. I did not see him for some time, but I could imagine him going through the rooms of the old house, examining the furniture, peering into the attics perhaps, to see if any treasure was hidden amongst the litter.

He had sold his shop when he bought the house, and cut himself altogether adrift from the routine of the counter and the associations of twenty years of business life. So far as I was concerned, he seemed to have vanished from all knowledge; and the interest excited by his brief confidences soon faded. Christmas came and went, with dirty weather: a fall of snow that covered the city with a white fleece, changed in a few hours to slush, with sleet falling, and then a heavy mist. For days the air exuded dampness; the street cleaners could not keep pace with the mud; traffic slopped and splashed through a welter of sludge and dreariness. At last the rain came down in a steady deluge, and floods raced in the gutters. For forty-eight hours the downpour continued; and then, in the night, came a gale of wind, with sunshine in the morning; and the city woke up to cleanness again. I re-

call the different changes particularly—one of those oddities of memory, I suppose, for which there is no obvious explanation. But there was a week of frost—clear, hard frost; skating began in the parks and at Wimbledon; there was a general air of cheeriness and briskness.

It was then that I saw Andrews again. He was walking slowly down Putney High Street. I did not recognize him at the moment. He seemed to have grown taller; carried himself erect. He was well dressed—quiet black suit, boots gleaming, gray suede gloves and a malacca cane. He noticed me, nodded and stopped. We exchanged only a few words, but I went on with the impression that he had changed decidedly, was almost a different person. He had a mustache now, which seemed to strengthen the face; there was alertness in the eyes and a general sense of authoritativeness. He had benefited by his environment; the old house by the riverside had brought new ways to its purchaser. And yet, even then, I realized that there was something else, not clearly definable: a hint of distress beneath the apparent confidence and poise.

Such glimpses as I had of him during the ensuing weeks deepened this impression. He was always well dressed and self-contained; but he lived with some obsession, walked with a shadow that grew more obtrusive. He had evidently begun to drink; once or twice I saw him coming out of a saloon. Then he dropped from view for some time. He had begun going to the West End, he told me, when I finally saw him again; to the opera, the theater.

"I feel like a man of fashion," he said, with an odd smile. "Just as if living in somebody else's house made me live somebody else's life. I thought I was pretty well fixed in my habits. But I'm restless. I want things I didn't want before—things that don't belong to me. I suppose it's nature making up for a stunted life. I'm going to Hurst Park for the races tomorrow," he added. "Let me take you down in my machine."

"So you've succumbed to the automobile?" I said, as I refused his offer.

"Yes. Didn't seem able to do without one. Have to move quickly in these days, y' know."

"Races and theaters and automobiles—it must seem like a dream to you, after your quiet life in the shop," I said.

He stared for a moment, not at me, but through me.

"A dream?" he repeated. "Yes. That's it. A mighty queer dream. I'd like—" He checked himself. Then Mr. Vanderbilt's coach swept over the bridge and up the High Street, and he turned to watch it. When it had passed, he nodded to me and went his way.

The next time I saw him was in the police station at Walham Green.

I was speaking to the sergeant at the desk about a small affray that I had witnessed during my wanderings, when he came in. It was nearly midnight, and he walked like a man who had been drinking heavily.

"Well, sir?" said the sergeant, looking at him doubtfully.

Andrews stood for a little while as if he were dazed. Then he stretched out his right arm, thrusting forward, as if pushing away some obsession.

"Come, come," the sergeant said. "What's the matter, Mr. Andrews?"

Andrews found his voice, but it was weak and irresolute.

"I've come to give myself up," he said.

"Eh?" exclaimed the sergeant. "Man alive, what for?"

Andrews looked at him helplessly.

"For murder," he whispered.

"Nonsense," said the sergeant, watching him keenly. "You couldn't commit a murder if you tried for a year. I know you too well, Mr. Andrews. Come now. You've been drinking or dreaming, haven't you?"

Andrews seemed to stiffen. The limpness went out of him, and the new authoritativeness that had grown in him came to the front.

"I've come to give myself up for murder," he said. "I don't wish to discuss the matter. 'You've got your duty to do. Do it.'"

I saw the sergeant's eyes widen. "You're queer tonight, Mr. Andrews," he said. "And that's a true word and no mistake. Man alive, you're not yourself. But who *are* you? You're the living image of someone—someone I've known—I can't rightly remember just who. I've got it!" he said, and brought his fist down with a bang on the desk. "Sir John. That's it. Sir John Cranston, that's dead and buried these six months." He turned to me. "I've never seen a clearer likeness," he said. "Now isn't that strange—and all from living in the same house, I suppose! Well, it beats me."

"I'd like to know—" Andrews began.

"So would I," interrupted the sergeant. "Why, you've changed again! You're just the same man that I've known for years. But I tell you, sir, a dead man was looking out of your eyes a minute ago."

"Hush," Andrews said. "Don't talk about dead men." He looked helpless and dazed again.

The sergeant spoke to him gently. "You'd better get this worry off your chest, Mr. Andrews. What is it? Let's hear the whole story, and then we'll see daylight."

"I killed him," Andrews said.

"Yes," said the sergeant. "Yes. Who was it?"

Andrews looked puzzled. "I can't remember," he said. "I've forgotten. But I did know. Let me see." He knitted his brows. "He was a youngish man. Thin. Middle height. Black hair—jet black. Brown eyes. Yes, brown. A scar on one cheek—the left cheek. And I killed him. Strangled him. Yes, that was it, strangled him. And he sank down on the floor—dead."

The sergeant listened patiently. "But he was young and strong," he said. "And you are an old man, Mr. Andrews. How could you strangle him?"

Andrews looked at his hands. "I strangled him," he said. "I ought to know, oughtn't I? Twisted my hands round his thin white throat. Choked him." He looked up, hesitating, like a wizened child. "That's clear, isn't it?" he asked.

The sergeant began to take notes.

"Yes, that's clear," he said. "Perfectly clear. Go on. Why did you strangle him?"

"I can't remember," Andrews said. "I've forgotten. But I did know." He knitted his brows again. "I remember," he said. "I was jealous of him. That's it—jealous."

"Why?" asked the sergeant.

Andrews hesitated. "I don't like to tell you," he said.

"Come, come!" the sergeant broke in. "The whole story, please."

"I refuse to tell you," Andrews said, drawing himself up. "There was a woman. Never mind who. You don't need to press the point. For God's sake, keep her out of it."

"You can't keep anybody out of a murder," the sergeant insisted. "Don't be afraid. Just tell us everything. We'll keep it to ourselves. Now, who was it? Was it your wife?" He glanced at me.

Andrews seemed overpowered by the stronger will. "Yes," he muttered. "It was my wife."

The sergeant glanced at me again. Mrs. Andrews had been dead fifteen years.

"It was my wife," Andrews repeated in a stronger voice. "Why should I conceal it? She'd nothing to be ashamed of. It was only that—*cur*—who wouldn't leave her alone. So I killed him. I tell you, he practically asked for it. Came creeping into the house when he thought I was away. But I was there." He chuckled. "I *knew*. He will make love to no more women." The sergeant was making no more notes. "Where's the body?" he asked, with a half-smile.

"I buried it," Andrews answered. "Buried it. In the garden, on the other side of the rhododendron bushes. He wasn't heavy. The moon shone on his face when I put him in his grave. Shone on his face as he lay on his back, before I shoveled in the earth and stamped it down and smoothed it. He was a handsome man. Quite young. I suppose it was natural for him to make love to women. But he's dead now."

Dead and buried, waiting for the Day of Judgment, with the glimmer of the moonlight on his face."

"How long ago was all this?" the sergeant asked. "Yesterday? A week ago? Eh?"

"I can't remember," Andrews said. "I've forgotten. But I did know." Once more he knitted his brows in that puzzled way. "It seems a long time. And yet it seems only last night—or the night before. I can't remember. But it's been haunting me. I can't sleep. He's always there, with his face upturned and the moonlight on it. I killed him. And I can't sleep. I've got to tell and take the consequences. There's no way out of it."

"There's a good deal of moonshine in your story, I'm thinking," the sergeant said. "But I suppose we'll have to investigate; and better now than by daylight, with curiosity hunters watching every step. Come, Mr. Andrews. If I go down with you, will you show me where you buried him?"

"Of course," Andrews answered. "But you mustn't move him. Let him rest. It's all over now. Let him rest, with the light on his face and the earth upon his body."

"We won't disturb him," the sergeant said. "I guess there's nothing much to disturb—except moonshine." He hesitated, looking at Andrews. "But I think we'll take the doctor along," he added.

Only a few minutes were spent in preparations. The police surgeon was sent for, and a deputy took the sergeant's place at the desk. Then we went out—Andrews, the sergeant, the doctor and myself.

We took a short cut to the King's Road, and so to the lane. It seemed a long walk down to the end, though there were four of us to share it, and companionship generally shortens distances. The moon was shining in the heavens, with here and there a light cloud floating by. No one spoke aloud. The sergeant was whispering in a low voice to the doctor, telling him the story; and Andrews kept muttering to himself from time to time. When we came to the

house and the water, he took us into the gardens through an unlocked side door.

"Now," said the sergeant, "let's get this business over, and see if we can lay the ghost that's been haunting you, Mr. Andrews. You lead the way."

"To the grave?" Andrews asked, in a low voice.

"Yes," the sergeant answered; "to the hole you dug, or think you dug."

I had never before been inside the gardens, and had not realized their extent. A high wall has a narrowing effect. Now, in the moonlight, there seemed a wide expanse of ordered grounds, old-fashioned, though, with odd bits of statuary here and there, and little formal flower plots—vacant now and bare. There were only a few trees, I noticed.

Andrews led the way across the lawn and away beyond some bushes, to the far corner, nearest the water. There he stopped, and pointed.

"Here, is it?" asked the sergeant, flashing his lantern on the ground. "Well, I can't see any marks of digging."

Andrews was pointing to one spot. "It's there," he said. "Can't you see?"

"No, I can't," the sergeant answered, somewhat sharply. "But I suppose we'd better dig up your moonshine. We'll begin by borrowing a spade, if you please."

So we went round to the back of the house and found a couple of spades. When we reached the place again, Andrews pointed to the precise spot—he seemed to be absolutely sure—and the sergeant and I began digging, with impatience on his part, I could tell plainly, and something like indifference on mine. I was more interested in the psychology of the matter than in any mere proof that the story was a dream obsession, a persisting hallucination; and while I was digging I kept glancing at Andrews. He stood watching us, with his hands behind his back and his face quite composed. The sergeant looked up once or twice. "He's gone back to the Sir John likeness," he whispered to me. Andrews did not hear him.

The ground was fairly hard and the digging took time. We had hollowed out a respectable grave, and were getting tired, when Andrews leaned forward, pointing. The sergeant turned his lantern downward and peered at the broken earth.

"Better get out and leave this to me," he said, and went on digging steadily and carefully, while I climbed out of the hole and stood by Andrews and the doctor, watching. And, bit by bit, the sergeant uncovered bones, until a complete skeleton lay before us, with the moonlight on its skull. Then the sergeant climbed out also.

"Will you just look at that, sir?" he said to the doctor—a very taciturn man, who had not uttered a word so far. He did not speak now, but took the lantern from the sergeant and lowered himself into the hole. After a while he looked up.

"As nearly as I can estimate," he said in a drawl, "Mr. Andrews committed his murder about two hundred years ago. These bones have been here for generations."

"I reckoned so," the sergeant said. "Well, I can't arrest you for that now, Mr. Andrews, can I?" He turned to me. "But it's queer, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's queer," I agreed.

Andrews was gazing at the skeleton.

"I don't understand," he said. "Where is he? I buried him. A day

ago. Two days ago. He can't have become *that*—already."

The doctor was still in the hole.

"You've had a strange dream, Mr. Andrews," he said; "and it's backed up by a strange coincidence. But no jury would convict on the evidence, I imagine."

The sergeant laughed harshly. "Forget it, Mr. Andrews," he said. "We won't say anything about it—except in my report. Of course I must send in a report."

"I don't understand," Andrews repeated. "I know I killed him. Buried him, with the moonlight on his face."

"About two hundred years ago," the sergeant said. "But the moonlight's still there. Come, we'll go back. Are you ready, Doctor?"

The doctor joined us.

"I think we'll see Mr. Andrews in bed first," he remarked. "And I believe a sleeping draught will do no special harm."

That's all the story that matters. Explain it as you wish. It seems clear to me.

Andrews did not give up the house. He stayed there till his death, last month. I had several long conversations with him, but his brain seemed warped. Sometimes he would comprehend, sometimes he was altogether vacuous. But he never shook off the obsession. To himself, he was a murderer. Perhaps he knew best.



THE standard American pronunciations for "monsieur":

Monsoo

Mongsewer

Muhseer

Mushoo



THE average individual who sells tickets in a railway station acts like a Nihilist; but down in his heart he feels himself nothing less than a Czar.

WHITE SILENCE

By Mahlon Leonard Fisher

SOFT carpeted with snow, the paved ways lie,
As if for some fair bride to tread upon—
A fairer than yet seen beneath the sun!
Slow, through bewildered streets, the pale flakes fly,
Or, eddying about the blazing arc lights, die
Like summer insects lured to unseen death,
Or pallid souls that cannot stand the breath
Of life, and perish in its furnace sigh.
Faster, and yet more fast, the still-shod fall
On all the walks, wind-drifted, till they seem
Like sudden sculptures carved out in a dream
And by deft hands upheaped 'gainst gate and wall;
What wonder were these changed ways angel-trod,
And this White Silence but the hush of God!



MAN AND WOMAN

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

WARRING with mounting wave on wave,
She called on him to come and save:
"Lo, I am lost! I need thee, dear!"
He would not hear.

Deep in a scented garden close,
Heavy with twilight rue and rose,
She hid among the flowers, and thence
She whispered: "Find me!" But he said:
*"Wait till the last low light is dead,
An hour hence."*

Another day, another heart!
"Who never met," she said, "must part—
For I am his, nor can be thine."
"Nay, but," he swore, "by every art
I'll make thee mine!"

AT THE SHOWDOWN

By Fritz Krog

SHE was a better man than he was, but that did not keep him from falling in love with her. He was earning twenty-five dollars a week and she was earning forty, but that did not keep him from asking her to marry him. She refused him, but that did not put an end to the affair. That was only the beginning of it.

They worked in the same office. The business was advertising. She was head of the copy service department. He was a copy writer, working under her direction. He talked over his work with her. He looked into her eyes when she addressed him. Sometimes, when a paper passed between them, their hands touched. Throughout the day he had only to lift his head and there she was, his one woman in the world.

The situation maddened him. He could not see his way out of it. To remain in the office, as the girl had insisted that he must, was painful. To leave it was more painful, because she would not meet him outside of the office. To stop loving her was impossible. To stop pleading with her was almost equally difficult, and when he could no longer control himself, he would break down, at their work, in the elevator, on the street, to tell her in so many words that he could not live without her. If his tongue was silent, his eyes spoke. The stenographers, who hated her and whispered things about her around the water cooler, pitied him from the bottom of their hearts.

His first impulse, to throw up his job, recurred constantly, and it took such hold on him one evening that he felt driven to action. But he was not content simply to walk out of the office and

out of the girl's life. A streak of theatricalism in his make-up provoked him to march into the sanctum of the boss and proclaim a formal leavetaking. That he found the girl there did not stop his mouth, and perhaps her presence even at such a time touched his heart with bitterness. He was confused and mixed his valedictory with hints of its cause.

"I thought it would help clear the atmosphere," he finished apologetically, and looked furtively at the girl.

She was good to look upon. With the old loveliness of colorful, graceful, vibrant girlhood rounding into womanhood, she possessed the added charm of the woman who works in the world of affairs. There is no more defining that beauty than naming a growth compounded of a pine bursting through a rock and of a rose blooming in an old garden.

Mansend, the boss, knew something about men. Every successful advertising man does—a great deal. He knew what that great big fool of a boy, stammering about love and quitting, was suffering, and he had no intention of adding to his hurt. At the same time, he had no intention of losing this opportunity to lose the boy, who had always been a flashy worker, a merely clever man. Those who know the advertising game, which has for its aim the selling of merchandise and not clever ads, will know his worth to a dollar, and his desperate love had added nothing to his efficiency; it robbed him of his last excuse to draw a salary.

"I'm sorry for you, Kenyon," said Mansend, "but you've got the right dope this trip. If there's anything I can do for you—"

The girl promised an interruption. She had her handkerchief clutched in her fist and her eyes were swimming with tears.

"That's all right now, Miss Flower," Mansend continued quickly. "You go and see that those proofs get out tonight, will you?"

When she had gone, Mansend talked to Kenyon like a Dutch uncle. Men are not altogether without sympathy and they are glad to express it at times: man fashion, with a strange mixture of painful advice and brutal truth. Kenyon was much surprised at the kindness shown him, and he left the office in pretty good spirits.

Mansend found another job for him inside of a week, but he lost it in a month. Love incapacitates a man. It is truly a disease to him, and Kenyon had caught it in its most virulent form because he had imagination and temperament. He thought of Flower when he should have been considering the advantages of galvanized iron buckets over the wooden varieties. He was prone to dream of rehabilitating himself in her eyes and, by succeeding brilliantly, raise her respect for him to the pitch of love.

Out of work, he returned to Mansend, and Mansend gave him letters of introduction. These availed him nothing because now the greatest calamity of man befell him. From refusing to look any facts in the face, he turned about suddenly to stare too much at them, and, brooding over his bad luck, he lost his nerve. His girl had turned him down and he had lost two jobs, one quickly after the other; therefore his life was a wreck and he was destined to failure.

He returned to Mansend, the one shining hope in his night of despair, and Mansend conveniently washed his hands of him. Every man has his own notion of the help due his failing fellow creatures. When Mansend thought he had done enough for Kenyon, he refused flatly to do any more. He refused to see the poor devil, would not talk to him over the telephone, would not answer his letters.

Flower heard of this state of affairs

and went to Mansend to plead for his weaker brother. What she left unsaid provoked Mansend to be brutally frank with her. He told her that Kenyon was incompetent. That too much consideration had already been shown him. That to show him any more would make a sponger out of him. That the tendency to sponge was very strong in him. That the only thing to make a real man of him was to make life harder for him than it had been.

For all his pains Flower threatened to leave Mansend's employ on the spot, and when he hastily dropped personalities and began talking to her in general terms about the struggle for existence and the cruelties of the business world, she left his office in a huff. He paid her ability a high tribute in that he did not discharge her, because he knew what was going to happen. He saw it in her flaming cheeks and her flashing eyes when she chopped the argument by running away. Women hate theories and philosophies, anyway, except in their proper places between the covers of a book.

Within a month Mansend's forecast was verified. Flower walked into his office, announced that she was going to get married and asked for a week's vacation. Mansend's only astonishment was over the length of the vacation. But what followed was vastly more surprising. For when Flower returned from her brief honeymoon she demanded of him that he employ Kenyon again. Demand is the word. That was exactly what Flower did. She demanded, and being refused, she did more than she had expected to do and showed her claws. She explained clearly to Mansend how, if he did not do as she asked, she would quit him, tie up with a rival agency and trim him to a standstill. What is more to the point, she just about convinced him that she could do it.

He was not utterly bluffed. His shrewd business mind told him that her proposition was not such a bad one, after all. He was not afraid to lock horns with her, but he hated to lose her. She was working for about a third of the salary which a man of her ability would

have demanded. Moreover, Kenyon mooning in the office over an unrequited love would not be the same Kenyon married to quite the liveliest woman Mansend had ever known. Her husband would work; Flower promised that with a certain vicious earnestness which caused Mansend to smile. It was in this mood that he yielded to her wishes.

The result exceeded expectations. Not that matrimony had changed Kenyon. He was humble enough, steady enough, conscientious, on the job and all that for a month or two. But even during that period he showed a decided tendency to let Flower do his work, and afterward he allowed her to furnish everything about his work except a pair of hands. Mansend had her fenced into a little private coop at her request, and in the beginning of the new régime she would never allow her husband to enter it. The first suspension of this law marked the beginning of her taking over Kenyon's job. The installation of a buzzer marked the completion. She would buzz for him and he would sneak into her office to get back a half-baked piece of work to be done over again exactly as she commanded. Whenever Mansend was in a hurry she would do it herself, determined to allow him not a single peg on which to hang a complaint of Kenyon.

Mansend viewed the phenomenon in his office with wide open eyes. He had his period of suspended judgment, but that passed and he accepted the situation. He stopped thinking about it as an engineer stops thinking about a smooth-running engine. He almost lost sight of Kenyon entirely. As a matter of office routine he kept in touch with his copy service department through Flower, and she took good care not to remind him of her husband. If the two men had not met occasionally in the hallway or the elevator, Mansend might have forgotten that she had a husband.

But there was one individual in the office who never lost sight of the fact. This was Edith Winn. She had worked in the service department with Kenyon and Flower before they were married. She had always hated the one and held

the other in contempt. She was no longer young and had failed in the matrimonial game. She was ambitious without the ability to satisfy ambition. She had suffered Flower to pass her in the race for position in the department, but took comfort in accrediting Flower's success to her pretty face. When Kenyon gave up his position she thought he was a fool to take a coquette seriously. When Flower married him she put them both down as fools, and probably came very near being right about it. But when Kenyon returned to his old desk she decided that they were likewise very shrewd, and at once set about watching them in hopes of catching them at the very thing which occurred. She was the first in the department to discover that Flower was doing Kenyon's work for him, and after that she continued to watch and wait for an opportunity to use this discovery to her advantage.

Flower knew the menace, and watched and waited for an opportunity to fire Miss Winn. Flower had this prerogative, but she was too wise to exercise it without a legitimate excuse, and Miss Winn took good care not to furnish it. She had held down her job for so long a time that she knew to the last degree what was expected of her, and she kept her head. Both women were adepts in the art of concealing their feelings. The most careful observer could not have detected any rancor between them. No one in the office ever suspected them of being enemies.

Kenyon did not understand the situation. Flower explained it to him several times, but he could not keep it in mind, and he only half believed her when she was at greatest pains to remind him of it. Therein lay Miss Winn's greatest strength. Her greatest disadvantage was contained in the absolute trust which Mansend placed in Flower. She was the only individual in the service department who was privileged to interrupt him at his work. If he wanted anybody else, he would send for him or her. Only the most obvious excuse would permit a violation of this unwritten law.

Miss Winn found it after months of

waiting, and the scowl with which Mansend greeted her as she entered his private office did not disturb her, she was so sure of her ground.

"I have the copy here for Band's double page spread," she said, laying the work on his desk.

"Don't bother me. Take it to Miss Flower."

Mansend had never ceased calling her "Miss Flower," a contributory circumstance to his general oblivion of her husband.

"Mrs. Kenyon is not in the office and this copy can't wait. It must go out in the noon mail."

Miss Winn had her facts all straight, and the Band in question was one of Mansend's biggest clients. He grabbed the copy and ran his practised eye over it.

"Great Scott! Who did that rotten job?"

"Mr. Kenyon did it."

Mansend smothered a first impulse to ring for the culprit and gave the work to Miss Winn for correction, cautioning her to let him see it again before she sent it out. She obeyed him joyfully and the incident was closed. Neither Kenyon nor Flower learned anything about it: Miss Winn was careful not to let them know, and Mansend forgot it. But Mansend had been reminded of Kenyon's dependence on Flower, and that was the immediate result which Miss Winn had sought to attain.

Twice she repeated the performance before Flower found out what she was doing. Mansend told her. He was very kind, almost apologetic. He simply wished to remind her that he was too busy to check up anybody's work, no matter whose it might be. Flower accepted the rebuke in good grace and promised that no copy should leave the office in the future without her personal O. K. Quite casually she extracted the information from him that Miss Winn had brought Kenyon's mistakes to his notice, and when she learned this much she knew everything.

Mansend put the affair out of mind again until a month later, when he received what may be termed a visit of

state from Miss Winn. She sent her card in ahead, and when Mansend, profoundly puzzled, admitted her, she confronted him clad for the street. The hour was eleven in the morning, too late for excusable tardiness and too early for lunch.

"What the deuce—" Mansend grunted.

"I came to see if I could get a letter of recommendation from you," said Miss Winn.

"A what?"

"A letter of recommendation. That isn't asking too much, is it, after working here for eight years?"

"No. But I don't see why you want it."

"Oh, didn't you know that I wasn't working for you any more?"

Mansend continued to look mystified.

"Yes," Miss Winn continued, as gently as a spring zephyr; "Mrs. Kenyon discharged me two weeks ago."

Mansend asked questions and she answered them. In due time she led him up to the point where he was willing to listen to anything she might have to say. She had much to say. She declared that she had been unjustly dealt with. She told Mansend that Flower had beat her to premiership in the service department by fraud and chicanery. That she had kept her down after she had acquired power. That she had put her husband on the payroll without even the shadow of an excuse. That she had raised his salary to a ridiculous figure while her own had never been changed by a cent, and that, to crown her whole audacious conduct, she had finally discharged her, the innocent lamb.

Mansend made due allowance for her viewpoint, but when that had been eliminated he confronted the disagreeable probability that she had not gotten a square deal from Flower. At the same time he could not afford to give his sense of justice full play. Flower was worth so much more to him than Miss Winn, and since peace in the service department demanded that one of them go, he gave Miss Winn letters of recommendation and let her go. She was bitterly disappointed, but had she known all of

Mansend's mind she might have taken more than a grain of comfort with her out of the office.

For he had decided to discharge Kenyon, and as soon as she had gone he sent for Flower. He chose to take up the matter with her rather than to deal directly with Kenyon, because, in his commercial vernacular, he wanted "to let her down easy." He was willing to argue with her to any length, and he hoped to convince her of what, to him, had suddenly revealed itself as an impossible condition in his office. But if she proved unreasonable he was fully determined to get rid of Kenyon over her head. What she might do in that event was speculative, and he was considering this crux of the situation, half sitting, half leaning on his flat-topped desk, when she entered.

As she stepped into the office the light from a great window at his back sharply revealed every line of her figure and her face. They were not so girlish as when she had thrown the gauntlet at his feet in this same pending issue, but she was still pleasing to look upon. Maturity and the inevitable lines about her mouth and on her forehead had robbed her, perhaps, of prettiness, but they left an impression of dignity and seriousness compelling vastly more respect than round cheeks and a baby complexion. She was oddly fragile beside Mansend, who was a physical giant, six feet two, broad of shoulder, deep of voice and capable of crushing the life out of her with one of his hands. Yet she had licked him once.

"Did you wish to see me?" she began.

A note of weariness in her voice caused him to look more closely in her face, and he remarked dark shadows under her eyes.

"Hard on the job, eh?" he said, and, man fashion, made a mockery of his sympathy by lighting a cigar.

"Hard on the job," she repeated good-naturedly.

"I sent for you," he went on, speaking slowly and deliberately, "to tell you that we'll have to drop that husband of yours from the payroll."

An unusual effort to be kind had made him be unusually harsh.

"Edith Winn has been here," Flower instantly replied.

"I won't deny that," said Mansend. "But what she had to say to me cuts no ice with John Kenyon. He's got to go. Now don't you make this hard for me, Miss Flower."

But she interrupted him.

"I'm head of your service department, am I not?" she demanded.

"Yes."

"I have been running it for the last three years. You've never had any complaint to make before this. You have often said to me that you didn't want to be bothered about your office details. You said that you had employed me to take care of them."

"I know, but—"

"Just a minute. I have come to you time and again to complain about some copy writer or other, or to get a raise of salary for somebody. You always took my word in these matters the same as in any others. You allowed me to employ new people. I have fired a dozen others and you never called me in a single instance. Now because that Winn woman tells you stories and mixes my private affairs into her troubles you want to interfere in my conduct of the department. It's not right, I tell you."

"Now, Miss Flower," said Mansend, "don't make me tell you a lot of things you don't want to hear."

"You don't have to," said Flower. "I'll tell you everything you want to say to me. You want to tell me that my husband is incompetent. You want to tell me that I raised his salary last month. You want to tell me that I jobbed Edith Winn out of the office. You want to tell me that I did it to protect my private, individual interests."

She paused for breath.

"Well, I admit that all those things are so. But isn't it just as true that while my husband is incompetent, I have been holding down his job for him?"

"But the raise in his salary?"

"I'm coming to that."

She asked Mansend for the payroll, and he gave it to her from his desk.

"Look there," she said. "That's my salary when I married, forty dollars a week. You raised it to fifty then. It hasn't been raised since, has it? No. Well, since I was holding down John's job what was the difference between adding to his salary or to mine? Wasn't it all the same?"

Mansend started.

"I admit that I fired Edith Winn without any excuse except that she was trying to get me. You know that. She used to bring my husband's work in here when I was out of the office and couldn't watch her."

Flower winced at her own words, containing such a powerful argument for Kenyon's pitiable dependence on her.

"You won't deny that she did that?" she continued.

"No."

"I didn't like to fire her. I felt sorry for her. But as soon as she started coming in here with John's mistakes she began pressing me too hard. I had to get rid of her. You know I didn't do any different from what anybody else would have done in my place. Every office has things like that happen in it. I can name you at least two people around here who depend on you, not on their work, to keep them here."

Mansend scowled and looked uncomfortable.

"I know it's none of my business," Flower went on. "But you've got to be fair to me and let me point out how you don't even go to the trouble to hold down your friends' jobs. I do manage to deliver the goods for John, don't I?"

"That's not the point," said Mansend, impatiently flicking his cigar ash. "You're not running this business and I am. That's the difference. When I put a dead one on the payroll I charge him up to profit and loss. You can bet your sweet life I'm not doing any stunts like that unless I've got to, and when I do, I don't throw any bluffs to cover up my tracks."

"I'm not," Flower burst out.

"Not to me, no. But how about the

rest of the plant? I hope nobody else knows what you're doing. But as far as I know maybe there are a lot more besides Miss Winn who are wise to your game. Don't holler now. That's the way it looks to everybody but you—a game. And that's what it is. Suppose everybody in the office tried it?"

"That's absurd," Flower answered. "Surely I deserve more consideration than most other people around here."

"You do. But haven't you gotten it? You've kept Kenyon on the payroll for two years, haven't you? You raised his salary and I didn't kick, did I? But I'll tell you right now, Miss Flower, this thing has got to stop."

"And I say it sha'n't."

They passed a long look between them, these two queer contestants, the big man and the weak little woman. Both knew by that look that this struggle would be carried to the last ditch, and each after the manner of his and her sex prepared for the showdown. He lit a fresh cigar and she flicked a handkerchief out of her blouse.

"Listen to me now, Miss Flower," he said, "I don't want any more row over this than is absolutely necessary. There are a lot of things that you don't know anything about because you are a woman."

Flower choked back a smile.

"You don't know what it means to win out in business. It's a fight the same as fishes fight to live, and wild animals. The best man wins. The others go down and out. We don't go at each other the way they used to, with clubs and axes, but we kill one another just the same. We back a man up against a wall, we make him give up his money, we take his nerve away from him, we break down his health. Then he dies. It's just a question of time. I killed lots of men just that way to get this business started and keep it going. I had to do it. I've still got to do it. If I let up somebody would get me sure. There are a half-dozen fellows right here in this office who are sitting up nights trying to figure out my weak spots to get in on me. It wouldn't do me any good to fire 'em. The fellows I'd hire

in their places would do the same as they are doing. I've just got to watch and take care of myself. That's what I'm doing when I force you to get rid of John Kenyon."

"You don't suspect me of trying to take advantage of you!" Flower interrupted.

"I'll give you the benefit of the doubt," said Mansend, "and say I'm not. But don't you see that I can't afford to give you any advantage? Why should I make an exception in your case? Because you are a woman?"

"No," said Flower. "Not that. I have never asked you to make a single concession on account of my sex, and I won't do it now. I ask you to make an exception because you know I wouldn't double-cross you and because I have earned the right to ask it. You have known me for five years. In all that time I have been fair and square with you. I have held down my job. I have never schemed in my own interests except in this one instance, and I have been open and above board throughout in that. But you have taken advantage of my sex. You have been paying me scarcely half of what you would have paid a man in my place. And you would have had to watch him every hour."

"You never complained. I don't mind, since you mention it—"

"No. I am not pleading with you now to pay me a just salary. I am willing to let that pass. It's this other thing that I want to convince you of."

"You can't do it."

"Can't I?"

"No—you—can't."

Again that long, silent defiance of eye to eye.

"Well, then," said Flower, "what are you going to do about it?"

"What are *you* going to do about it?"

"Nothing."

"You will."

"I won't."

"John Kenyon quits tomorrow if I have to throw him out by the scuff of the neck."

"Then I'll go with him."

Mansend's face had reddened with anger, and now it knotted with deter-

mination. For the first time Flower saw it ugly with the mood of man the antagonist, whose heart is set on fight and to whom argument is insult.

"Do you mean?" she asked in a voice scarcely above a whisper, "that you would let me go?"

"I do."

"Don't send him away. Let me go. I'll go. I'll go willingly. He can bring his work home to me nights. I'll see to it that he brings me every bit of his copy, and I'll go over it so there will be no mistakes in it. We can work that way, he and I. We have always done it so. You keep him."

"Never in this world."

"Oh, can't you see I've got to go and he's got to stay? I can't work here any more—I can't work anywhere. *I've got to go home.*"

With that she hurried out of the office.

Mansend's face, red with anger and antagonism, grew a shade redder as the intelligence which she had flung at his head slowly sank into his man's mind.

"Phew!" said he, and scratched his chin; which was the high sign of puzzlement in Mansend.

But then he blew another breath and swung around to his work. After all, it was none of his business. The Mansend Advertising Agency was not a philanthropic enterprise. Flower had admitted this herself when she stopped bluffing to plead with him, and he couldn't see that her valedictory remarks had changed the main issue. Not at all. In fact, when he considered the matter, she had merely made her case worse. She had cooked her goose before; she had simply shown him how well it was done by telling him what she had better, perhaps, have kept to herself.

At the same time, neither she nor that whole crazy Kenyon affair would just get out of mind. Among his business and advertising ideas sneaked a suspicion that maybe commerce was not the cold and bloody affair he had pictured for Flower. As a matter of fact, it paid sometimes to be unbusinesslike. He remembered the case of a man with whom he had worked years ago, who

had been knocked out by overmuch drinking and whose boss had sent him to Carlsbad, with the result that he picked up and came back good as ever. Any first class advertising man was worth that much risk.

Yet, Flower's case was different, and no matter how he dealt with her, there was Kenyon, too. The whole trouble was over him. A rank holdup, that's what it was. He wouldn't stand for it. What did she take him for, anyway? An easy mark?

Still he could not forget what Flower had told him in her extremity. If he had been able to find a single peg on which to hang a defense of her he would have surrendered: so he told himself a hundred times. But the trouble was that, although she didn't have any defense, he felt as though she ought to have one.

That maddened him by and by, and he began pacing his office, smoking like a chimney and growling under his breath; meanwhile growing always more firmly resolved that he would fire the whole Kenyon family again, if he had to do it again. He would bounce them three times a day if they gave him a chance. He would show them as often as they liked who was running this place. He was sorry he hadn't shown Flower with a little more finality where to get off. He almost wished she would brace him again so that he could do her up with a little better finish.

In the excess of his feeling he suddenly stopped at his desk to push a button there. That is to say, he rammed the button with his thumb to the extent that the desk slid across the rug. Three times he rammed, waited about five seconds and did it again. And repeated the performance until he got results.

They came in the person of Miss Hammet, who answered to three rings. She walked leisurely in, poking a pencil into a mountain of rich brown hair, which was a source of great pride to her, as is her crowning glory to any woman. Only in Miss Hammet's case the crown did not sit on much glory. She had the general outline and physiognomy of a sparrow. A very large one and slow to move, but a sparrow, nevertheless.

"Did you bring your notebook?"

"Yes sir," Miss Hammet replied, so staggered by the tone of Mansend's voice that she almost fell into a chair by his desk leaf.

"Take this."

She wondered what the excitement was about.

"My dear Miss Flower," he began.

"Who?"

"Flower. Flower. Don't you know the people in this office?"

"Oh, Mrs. Kenyon!"

"No, not 'Mrs. Kenyon.' I want you to put it down the way I tell you: 'My dear Miss Flower.'"

He paused and smoked.

"My dear Miss Flower:

"I have carefully considered from all sides—from all sides—" He stopped. "Strike that out. Say:

"After due consideration of the details connected with the matter which we discussed this morning—"

After a lengthy pause he wanted to know what he had dictated.

"Strike it out."

So they labored, Miss Hammet and Mansend, for an hour, when she read aloud the following:

"My dear Miss Flower:

"I have come to the conclusion, all things considered, that you had better take a year's leave of absence, dating from such time as you best see fit. Meanwhile I will hold your position open for you, and if you wish John Kenyon to look after your work while you are absent, I have no serious objections to such a course. But I would recommend that you employ one more copy writer to act as assistant to him. I expect a rush of work in your department, which will call for an increase of the force, anyway.

"Sincerely yours—"

When Miss Hammet had duly transcribed this on her typewriter and had returned with it to Mansend's office for his signature, she wanted to know what to do with it.

"Shall I mail it to her?"

"Mail it? Lay it on her desk—shove it down her throat!" shouted Mansend, frightening Miss Hammet away.

"I don't give a damn what you do with it," he added when she was gone.

But a minute later he was smiling.

A WOMAN OF PROMISE

By Richard Barry

BETWEEN the second and third acts Madame Helmuth, the greatest Aida of a decade, sat in her dressing room waiting for her next call. She was chatting with her old friend, Clara Newcombe, who always had a small part in any company in which she appeared, when the wardrobe mistress, Mrs. Negley, entered.

"If you will pardon me, madame," said the mistress of the robes, "there is a matter I should like to bring to your attention. You are so very kind I know you will thank me for telling you of this case. It is indeed deserving."

"Yes, Mrs. Negley. I am listening," replied the great star, to whom the management was obliged, each time before she appeared in any performance, to pay her fifteen hundred dollars, not in a cheque, but in crisp unused bills fresh from the bank.

Though overparticular about her payment in advance, which seemed rather odd now in view of the fact that she had a valid contract with one of the most substantial corporations in existence, in whose directorate were eight of the leading millionaires in America, Madame Helmuth was not overcareful of the money once she had received it. Her wages for that evening, a good year's income for an average family, lay, at that moment, rather carelessly, in the jewel box on her make-up table.

"This is a girl, eighteen years old, a friend of mine. She has no friends with any money. Her family is very poor. She is obliged to support herself."

"Ah!" said Madame Helmuth, glancing impatiently at her little gold clock, her hand instinctively wandering toward the jewel box. "And she is ill—with

no one to care for her—spare me the details, please. It distresses me to hear them. It is a genuine case, I know, or you would not speak of it. How much?"

The wardrobe woman shook her head. "No," she protested, "that is not it. I must tell you about her. She has a marvelous voice—but untrained. I am sure that, in time, with the proper direction, she will make a wonderful singer."

A frown crossed the face of the great singer. Her hand left the jewel box, where it had strayed unconsciously. "That is interesting," she commented; "then she is in good health?"

"In perfect health. But she is obliged to work eight hours a day to earn her living. That leaves her no time for study. Ah, if you could but hear her voice!"

Madame Helmuth interrupted the praise which Mrs. Negley was uttering, once she saw her opportunity.

"How much does she earn?"

"Twelve dollars a week. Oh, it is pitiful! A great talent—positive genius—wasting away in the bookkeeper's cage in a clothing house. If you—"

The imperial Helmuth stopped the flow of words with a gesture. "That is four dollars a week more than enough for her to live on, according to the last reports of the investigating committee of Hull House. She is lucky!"

An electric buzzer sounded over the door of the dressing room. It was the call for the fourth act. The star rose and surveyed herself carefully in the triple mirrors.

"But if someone would only give her the chance to develop her voice it would not be a charity, I assure you. It would

be only a loan. She could surely pay it back in a few years." The wardrobe woman followed the operatic glory to the door, almost slavishly. Her plea, however, met stony resistance.

At the door the gorgeous Helmuth turned. "Tell her, Mrs. Negley," was her parting word, "that if she studies and practises faithfully, every moment she can find, for two years, and will then come to me I will listen to her—for half an hour."

"But—"

"No. That is all I can do."

A few minutes later the magnificent soprano was thrilling the thousands who crowded the dim spaces of the opera house.

In the dressing room Clara Newcombe sat passively listening to the petulant outburst from the mistress of the robes.

"Who would have thought it?" exclaimed Mrs. Negley. "I almost promised my poor little friend that Madame Helmuth would help her. Madame is so kind usually. You remember what she did for the stage doorkeeper when his wife was ill; and two seasons ago, when I had pneumonia, how she came to the hospital twice a week, and paid all my bills, and saw to it that my place was held here for me. She is such a darling—so generous, so thoughtful. And she never seems to be jealous of other singers, either—"

"Naturally," commented Clara Newcombe drily. "A star of the first magnitude does not resent the component units of the Milky Way."

"Well," resumed Mrs. Negley, caressing the closed jewel box with a sly joy, as if she would filch a slight satisfaction even if she were denied what she had come to believe was almost her right, "I suppose she has a lot of expenses and cannot afford it. She takes care of her father and mother and two sisters, and that no-account brother, and—"

"No," interrupted Clara, "that is not it. She regularly gives away a third of her income. She could help your friend if she wanted to. But in all the years I have known her since she has received big money, and I am her closest friend, she has always consistently refused to

help young women of promise—unless they were sick or peculiarly unfortunate. Now if your friend were a cripple, or something like that, the situation would doubtless be different."

Mrs. Negley wandered about the room, feeling of the various gowns which hung, under cambric coverings, on their hooks. She was loth to give up. Suddenly she turned on Miss Newcombe.

"Isn't that rather cruel?"

"Oh, I don't know. She does not mean it so."

"True, she has a kind nature, but she must realize that a singer is not like any other artist. She requires rest, careful tuition, skillful direction. She must have time to study languages. Oh, you know what a terrible lot she must have—you who are a singer. And Madame Helmuth has gone through it all herself. How can she be so heartless?"

"Don't say that again, please."

"Forgive me, Miss Newcombe, but you know what I mean. Did you never have any help? Do you feel that same way?"

Mrs. Negley turned and squarely faced the confidante of the internationally celebrated soprano. She was aware of the gossip of the opera house: that Clara Newcombe would never be able to secure even the modest engagement she had there were it not for the devotion of her protector, the great Helmuth.

"Yes," admitted Clara, and her face suddenly lost all of its life. She looked as if she had grown years older in a moment. From being a cheerful and self-satisfied middle-aged woman, she lapsed, almost instantly, into the semblance of one who has failed in life, and failed miserably.

"Yes," she repeated, "but I am a mediocrity."

"This opera does not employ mediocrities," stoutly asserted Mrs. Negley, with insinuating flattery that brought no smile in response.

"Yes, it does. It employs Clara Newcombe." She sat up with a stiff start. "And at one time everyone thought I would be a great singer. The supreme Cavadossi, who taught me in

Italy, predicted everything for me. Yet"—she shrugged her shoulders and relapsed into languid ease—"you see what I am."

"Yet," persisted Mrs. Negley, "you could not have done even as much as you have without assistance."

"How do you know that?" cried Clara. "Who knows what I might have done had my talent—no one questioned it—not in those early years—been required to fight for its own expression? Instead, it was nurtured and caressed, dandled and spoiled. I had everything a girl could want—the best teachers, all of my time to study and to rest, good clothes, every opportunity."

"But I thought you were a poor girl!"

"I was—but rich, for I had a friend."

"Ah!" shouted Mrs. Negley. "Did I not tell you? Every young singer must have an influential friend."

"I had one," continued Clara Newcombe, and her lips curled in irony as she said it, "and she was the noblest soul in all the world. How she loved me; how she sacrificed for me; how she tended me as though I were her child! No heiress was ever more fortunate than I!"

"Oh, if my dear friend could be so lucky!" Mrs. Negley sank to a footstool at Clara's feet, and looked up at her adoringly. But she was puzzled at the bitter irony in the face of the middle-aged singer, the "mediocrity," who knew she was a mediocrity.

"Listen!" said Clara, becoming more alert. "I will tell you my story, and you may repeat it to your young friend. It may be of some value to her. Madame Helmuth will give her no money, but you tell her this story."

"Yes, yes," came impatiently from the wardrobe woman.

"My parents were very poor, and when I was quite young I went to work as a clerk in a music store. I used to sing and play popular songs on a store piano. I had not been singing a week when another girl, only a year older than I, came to work in the same store as cashier. We became friends. She had no family at all and was living alone.

She prevailed on me to go and live with her.

"From the first she said I had a wonderful voice, and she never lost a chance to tell other people about it. She was the only girl I had ever known who was not jealous of me, for I was pretty, I did have a good voice and I was popular.

"However, my friend loved me only the more for all that. One day she said to me that I must stop work and train my voice, that I was ruining it in that cheap place and that I must have good teachers and every chance. I laughed at her and asked how it could be done.

"It would be very simple, she said. She would support the two of us. Often now I wonder at my infernal selfishness. I would condemn anyone else for doing a thing like that, but, unbelievable as it sounds, I did stop work and let that splendid girl do the work for two.

"I would lie abed always till nine or ten o'clock. She urged me to. She said it would conserve my strength, and I was only too willing to be spoiled.

"Meanwhile she rose every morning before seven, got her own breakfast and left mine ready for me when I should get up. When I stopped work she was getting only ten dollars a week, but she gave up her job the very first week and went to work for another music publishing house. She went out for them as a saleswoman.

"The first week she made eighteen dollars, and never less after that. Oh, she was a marvel of initiative and energy. She was not pretty, but she had an Irish wit that made her charming. Few of the boys that used to buzz around me ever paid much attention to her. They were sapheads—like myself.

"Once, however, it was different. My vocal teacher, whom she was paying five dollars a lesson for his work with my voice, met her one day when she called for me, and took a fancy to her. They came to be pretty good friends, and it did not bother me any, for he was an ugly little man and I always felt ashamed of his appearance if I was ever seen in public with him.

"One day he tried her voice, for fun,

and said she could sing, but she laughed at him, and said she couldn't afford to have two voices in the family. He said nothing more about it.

"All the time she was working harder and harder and saving every dollar she could lay hands on, for she wanted me to go abroad and study for two years with a teacher the little ugly old man said was the best in the world.

"Yes, it was a fairy tale, almost. For my friend developed an astonishing facility in making money. She had a perfect instinct for talking about music—she was selling scores of the opera to dealers and to a few selected wealthy customers—and dollars seemed to roll her way.

"The second year she sent me to Italy. It was a long time before I learned that she had interested a dear old wealthy woman in me, and that this old woman had put up the money. However, my friend had earned part of it, and was fully able to have earned the rest had she been so compelled.

"As for me, those were glorious years. I saw nothing ahead of me but the certainty of a great triumph in the opera. My teachers, liberally paid, freely predicted as much, and my friend never ceased her assurances. I had no doubts.

"Indeed, I was so certain that the happy stream of my life would flow on thus forever that I scarcely took the trouble to do the work required of me. I never had to worry where the next month's tuition was coming from, and so I often failed to take full value from this month's. And, as I felt sure of next month's board bill being paid, I enjoyed the present month to the full.

"I was just finishing my third year in Italy, when one day my friend joined me, unexpectedly. She had saved enough extra, she said, for a six weeks' trip, and

while she was there she used to accompany me to my lessons.

"And she would astonish me by practising the scores constantly in our room. After a day's work I wanted to go out and enjoy myself—have some fun in the cafés, or attend a dance. But she had only six weeks, she said, and so she spent all her time studying French and Italian, and practising scales.

"When she left me I was in fact relieved. Somehow her workaday presence seemed to profane the beautiful spirit of artistic accomplishment which I had built up around me. Despicable as it may seem, I was really ashamed of her."

Clara Newcombe paused. The last echoes of Aida's golden notes were penetrating the opera house, like a miracle, from the divine throat of the marvelous Helmuth.

"Yes," repeated Clara, "I was ashamed of the shabby appearance and the toil-worn face of my noble benefactor. I was glad when she went back to earn the money for my next year's expenses. And she was the truest, gentlest friend a woman ever had—"

"What became of her?" Mrs. Negley asked.

Clara Newcombe rose and opened the door of the dressing room. The two women looked out on the bustling stage, where the final curtain had just fallen. Some supernumeraries, in tan tights, were bustling past. The sturdy tenor tripped along, pinching the arms of some women in the chorus, laughing and joking.

Through the mass loomed the majestic form of the superb soprano. She saw the two in the door of her room, smiled and came gradually toward them.

"There she is," said the devoted mediocrity.

"What!" gasped the keeper of the robes. "Your lifelong friend is Helmuth? Good God! Helmuth!"



LOVE is only an explanation—never an excuse.

ONE DAY MORE

By Joseph Conrad

This play, the only one that Mr. Conrad has written, was performed by the Stage Society, London, and also at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, Paris. It is here offered for the first time to the American public.

CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*a retired coasting skipper*)

JOSIAH CARVIL (*formerly a shipbuilder—a widower—blind*)

HARRY HAGBERD (*son of CAPTAIN HAGBERD, who as a boy ran away from home*)

A LAMPLIGHTER

BESSIE CARVIL (*daughter of JOSIAH CARVIL*)

PLACE: *A small seaport.*

TIME: *The present—early autumn, toward dusk.*

SCENE—*To right, two yellow brick cottages belonging to CAPTAIN HAGBERD, one inhabited by himself, the other by the CARVILS. A lamppost in front. The red roofs of the town in the background. A seawall to left.*

SCENE I

The curtain rises disclosing CARVIL and BESSIE moving away from the sea wall. BESSIE about twenty-five. Black dress; black straw hat. A lot of mahogany-colored hair loosely done up. Pale face. Full figure. Very quiet. CARVIL, blind, unwieldy. Reddish whiskers; slow, deep voice produced without effort. Immovable, big face.

CARVIL (*hanging heavily on BESSIE's arm*)

Careful! Go slow! (*Stops; BESSIE waits patiently.*) Want your poor blind father to break his neck? (*Shuffles on.*) In a hurry to get home and start that everlasting yarn with your chum the lunatic?

BESSIE

I am not in a hurry to get home, father.

CARVIL

Well, then, go steady with a poor blind man. Blind! Helpless! (*Strikes the ground with his stick.*) Never mind! I've had time to make enough money to have ham and eggs for breakfast every morning—thank God! And thank God,

too, for it, girl. You haven't known a single hardship in all the days of your idle life. Unless you think that a blind, helpless father—

BESSIE

What is there for me to be in a hurry for?

CARVIL

What did you say?

BESSIE

I said there was nothing for me to hurry home for.

CARVIL

There is, though. To yarn with a lunatic. Anything to get away from your duty.

BESSIE

Captain Hagberd's talk never hurt you or anybody else.

CARVIL

Go on. Stick up for your only friend.

BESSIE

Is it my fault that I haven't another soul to speak to?

CARVIL (*snarling*)

It's mine, perhaps. Can I help being blind? You fret because you want to be gadding about—with a helpless man left all alone at home. Your own father, too.

BESSIE

I haven't been away from you half a day since mother died.

CARVIL (*viciously*)

He's a lunatic, our landlord is. That's what he is. Has been for years—long before those damned doctors destroyed my sight for me. (*Growls angrily, then sighs.*)

BESSIE

Perhaps Captain Hagberd is not so mad as the town takes him for.

CARVIL (*grimly*)

Don't everybody know how he came here from the North to wait till his missing son turns up—here—of all places in the world! His boy that ran away to sea sixteen years ago and never did give a sign of life since! Don't I remember seeing people dodge round corners out of his way when he came along High Street? Seeing him, I tell you. (*Groan.*) He bothered everybody so with his silly talk of his son being sure to come back home—next year—next spring—next month— What is it by this time, hey?

BESSIE

Why talk about it? He bothers no one now.

CARVIL

No. They've grown too fly. You've got only to pass a remark on his sailcloth coat to make him shut up. All the town knows it. But he's got you to listen to his crazy talk whenever he chooses. Don't I hear you two at it, jabber, jabber, mumble, mumble—

BESSIE

What is there so mad in keeping up hope?

CARVIL (*with scathing scorn*)

Not mad! Starving himself to lay money by—for that son. Filling his house with furniture he won't let anyone

see—for that son. Advertising in the papers every week, these sixteen years—for that son. Not mad! Boy, he calls him. Boy Harry. His boy Harry. His lost boy Harry. Yah! Let him lose his sight to know what real trouble means. And the boy—the man, I should say—must've been put away safe in Davy Jones's locker for many a year—drowned—food for fishes—dead. . . . Stands to reason, or he would have been here before, smelling around the old fool's money. (*Shakes BESSIE's arm slightly.*) Hey?

BESSIE

I don't know. Maybe.

CARVIL (*bursting out*)

Damme if I don't think he never had a son.

BESSIE

Poor man. Perhaps he never had.

CARVIL

Ain't that mad enough for you? But I suppose you think it sensible.

BESSIE

What does it matter? His talk keeps him up.

CARVIL

Aye! And it pleases you. Anything to get away from your poor blind father. . . . Jabber, jabber—mumble, mumble—till I begin to think you must be as crazy as he is. What do you find to talk about, you two? What's your game?

(*During the scene CARVIL and BESSIE have crossed stage from left to right slowly with stoppages.*)

BESSIE

It's warm. Will you sit out for a while?

CARVIL (*viciously*)

Yes, I will sit out. (*Insistent*) But what can be your game? What are you up to? (*They pass through the garden gate.*) Because if it's his money you are after—

BESSIE

Father! How can you?

CARVIL (*disregarding her*)
—to make you independent of your poor blind father, then you are a fool. (*Drops heavily on the seat.*) He's too much of a miser ever to make a will—even if he weren't mad.

BESSIE

Oh! It never entered my head. I swear it never did.

CARVIL

Never did. Hey! Then you are a still bigger fool. . . . I want to go to sleep! (*Takes off his hat, drops it on the ground, and leans his head back against the wall.*)

BESSIE

And I have been a good daughter to you. Won't you say that for me?

CARVIL (*very distinctly*)

I want—to—go—to—sleep. I'm tired. (*Closes his eyes.*)

(*During that scene CAPTAIN HAGBERD has been seen hesitating at the back of the stage, then running quickly to the door of his cottage. He puts inside a tin kettle (from under his coat), and comes down to the railing between the two gardens stealthily.*)

SCENE II

CARVIL *seated.* BESSIE. CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*white beard, sailcloth jacket*)

BESSIE (*knitting*)

You've been out this afternoon for quite a long time, haven't you?

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*eager*)

Yes, my dear. (*Slyly*) Of course you saw me come back.

BESSIE

Oh, yes. I did see you. You had something under your coat.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*anxiously*)

It was only a kettle, my dear. A tin water kettle. I am glad I thought of it just in time. (*Winks, nods.*) When a husband gets back from his work he needs a lot of water for a wash. See? (*Dignified*) Not that Harry'll ever need

to do a hand's turn after he comes home—(*Fallers—casts stealthy glances on all sides*)—tomorrow.

BESSIE (*looking up, grave*)

Captain Hagberd, have you ever thought that perhaps your son will not—

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*paternally*)

I've thought of everything, my dear—of everything a reasonable young couple may need for housekeeping. Why, I can hardly turn about in my room up there, the house is that full. (*Rubs his hands with satisfaction.*) For my son Harry—when he comes home. One day more.

BESSIE (*flattering*)

Oh, you are a great one for bargains. (*CAPTAIN HAGBERD is delighted.*) But, Captain Hagberd—if—if—you don't know what may happen—if all that home you've got together were to be wasted—for nothing—after all. (*Aside*) Oh, I can't bring it out.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*agitated; flings arms up, stamps feet; stuttering*)

What? What d'ye mean? What's going to happen to the things?

BESSIE (*soothing*)

Nothing! Nothing! Dust—or moth—you know. Damp, perhaps. You never let anyone into the house—

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

Dust! Damp! (*Has a throaty, gurgling laugh.*) I light the fires and dust the things myself. (*Indignant*) Let anyone into the house, indeed! What would Harry say? (*Walks up and down his garden hastily with tosses, flings and jerks of his whole body.*)

BESSIE (*with authority*)

Now, then, Captain Hagberd! You know I won't put up with your tantrums. (*Shakes finger at him.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*subdued, but still sulky, with his back to her*)

You want to see the things. That's what you're after. Well, no, not even

you. Not till Harry has had his first look.

BESSIE

Oh, no! I don't. (*Relenting*) Not till you're willing. (*Smiles at CAPTAIN HAGBERD, who has turned half round already.*) You mustn't excite yourself. (*Knits.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*condescending*)

And you the only sensible girl for miles and miles around. Can't you trust me? I am a domestic man. Always was, my dear. I hated the sea. People don't know what they let their boys into when they send them to sea. As soon make convicts of them at once. What sort of life is it? Most of your time you don't know what's going on at home. (*Insinuating*) There's nothing anywhere on earth as good as a home, my dear. (*Pause*) With a good husband . . .

CARVIL (*heard from his seat fragmentarily*)

There they go—jabber, jabber—mumble, mumble. (*With a groaning effort*) Helpless! (*BESSIE has glanced round at him.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*muttering*)

Extravagant ham and eggs fellow. (*Louder*) Of course it isn't as if he had a son to make a home ready for. Girls are different, my dear. They don't run away, my dear, my dear. (*Agitated*)

BESSIE (*dropping her arms wearily*)

No, Captain Hagberd—they don't.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*slowly*)

I wouldn't let my own flesh and blood go to sea. Not I.

BESSIE

And the boy ran away.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*a little vacantly*)

Yes, my only son Harry. (*Rouses himself.*) Coming home tomorrow.

BESSIE (*looks at him pityingly; speaks softly*)

Sometimes, Captain Hagberd, a hope turns out false.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*uneasy*)

What's that got to do with Harry's coming back?

BESSIE

It's good to hope for something. But suppose now—(*Feeling her way*) Yours is not the only lost son that's never—

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

Never what! You don't believe he's drowned. (*Crouches, glaring and grasping the rails.*)

BESSIE (*frightened, drops knitting*)

Captain Hagberd—don't. (*Catches hold of his shoulders over the railings.*) Don't— My God! He's going out of his mind! (*Cries.*) I didn't mean it! I don't know.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*backing away; with an affected burst of laughter*)

What nonsense! None of us Hagberds belonged to the sea. All farmers for hundreds of years. (*Paternal and cunning*) Don't alarm yourself, my dear. The sea can't get us. Look at me! I didn't get drowned. Moreover, Harry ain't a sailor at all. And if he isn't a sailor, he's bound to come back—tomorrow.

BESSIE (*has been facing him; murmurs*)

No. I give it up. He scares me. (*Aloud, sharply*) Then I would give up that advertising in the papers.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*surprised and puzzled*)

Why, my dear? Everybody does it. His poor mother and I have been advertising for years and years. But she was an impatient woman. She died.

BESSIE

If your son's coming, as—as you say—what's the good of that expense? You had better spend that half-crown on yourself. I believe you don't eat enough.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*confused*)

But it's the right thing to do. Look at the Sunday papers. Missing relatives on top page—all proper. (*Looks unhappy.*)

BESSIE (*tartly*)

Ah, well! I declare I don't know what you live on.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

Are you getting impatient, my dear? Don't get impatient—like my poor wife. If she'd only been patient she'd be here. Waiting—only one day more. (*Pleadingly*) Don't be impatient, my dear.

BESSIE

I've no patience with you sometimes.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*with a flash of lucidity*)

Why? What's the matter? (*Sympathetic*) You're tired out, my dear, that's what it is.

BESSIE

Yes, I am. Day after day. (*Stands listless, arms hanging down.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*timidly*)

House dull?

BESSIE (*apathetic*)

Yes.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*as before*)

H'm. Wash, cook, scrub. Hey?

BESSIE (*as before*)

Yes.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*pointing stealthily at the sleeping CARVIL*)

Heavy?

BESSIE (*in a dead voice*)

Like a millstone.

(*A silence.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*with a burst of indignation*)

Why don't that extravagant fellow get you a servant?

BESSIE

I don't know.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*cheerily*)

Wait till Harry comes home. He'll get you one.

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BESSIE (*almost hysterical; laughs*)

Why, Captain Hagberd, perhaps your son won't even want to look at me—when he comes home.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*in a great voice*)

What! (*Quite low*) The boy wouldn't dare—(*Rising choler*)—wouldn't dare to refuse the only sensible girl for miles around. That stubborn jackanapes refuse to marry a girl like you! (*Walks about in a fury.*) You trust me, my dear, my dear, my dear. I'll make him. I'll—I'll—(*Spititers*)—cut him off with a shilling.

BESSIE

Hush! (*Severe*) You mustn't talk like that. What's this? More of your tantrums?

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*quite humble*)

No, no—this isn't my tantrums—when I don't feel quite well in my head. Only, I can't stand this. . . . I've grown as fond of you as if you'd been the wife of my Harry already. And to be told—(*Can't restrain himself; shouts*) Jackanapes!

BESSIE

Sh-h. Don't you worry! (*Wearily*) I must give that up, too, I suppose. (*Aloud*) I didn't mean it, Captain Hagberd.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

It's as if I were to have two children tomorrow. My son Harry—and the only sensible girl— Why, my dear, I couldn't get on without you. We two are reasonable together. The rest of the people in this town are crazy. The way they stare at you. And the grins—they're all on the grin. It makes me dislike to go out. (*Bewildered*) It seems as if there was something wrong about—somewhere. My dear, is there anything wrong—you who are sensible . . .

BESSIE (*soothingly tender*)

No, no, Captain Hagberd. There is nothing wrong about you anywhere.

CARVIL (*lying back*)

Bessie! (*Sits up.*) Get my hat, Bessie. . . . Bessie, my hat. . . . Bessie. . . . Bessie. . . .

(*At the first sound BESSIE picks up and puts away her knitting. She walks toward him, picks up the hat and puts it on his head.*)

Bessie, my . . . (*Hat on head; shouting stops.*)

BESSIE (*quietly*)

Will you go in, now?

CARVIL

Help me up. Steady. I'm dizzy. It's the thundery weather. An autumn thunderstorm means a bad gale. Very fierce—and sudden. There will be shipwrecks tonight on our coast.

(*Exit BESSIE and CARVIL through door of their cottage. It has fallen dusk.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*picking up the spade*)

Extravagant fellow! And all this town is mad—perfectly mad. I found them out years ago. Thank God they don't come this way staring and grinning. I can't bear them. I'll never go again into that High Street. (*Agitated*) Never, never, never. Won't need to after tomorrow. Never! (*Flings down the spade in a passion.*)

(*While HAGBERD speaks, the bow window of the CARVILS' is lit up, and BESSIE is seen settling her father in a big arm-chair. She pulls down the blind. Enter LAMPLIGHTER. CAPTAIN HAGBERD picks up the spade and leans forward on it with both hands; very still, watching him light the lamp.*)

LAMPLIGHTER (*jocular*)

There! You will be able to dig by lamplight if the fancy takes you.

(*Exit LAMPLIGHTER to back.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*disgusted*)

Ough! The people here . . . (*Shudders.*)

LAMPLIGHTER'S VOICE (*heard loudly beyond the cottages*)

Yes, that's the way.

(*Enter HARRY from back.*)

SCENE III

CAPTAIN HAGBERD. HARRY. Later BESSIE

HARRY HAGBERD (*thirty-one, tall, broad shoulders, shaven face, small mustache. Blue serge suit. Coat open. Gray flannel shirt without collar and tie. No waistcoat. Belt with buckle. Black, soft felt hat, wide-brimmed, worn crushed in the crown and a little on one side. Good nature, recklessness, some swagger in the bearing. Assured, deliberate walk with a heavy tread. Slight roll in the gait. Walks down. Stops, hands in pockets. Looks about. Speaks*). This must be it. Can't see anything beyond. There's somebody. (*Walks up to CAPTAIN HAGBERD's gate.*) Can you tell me . . . (*Manner changes. Leans elbow on gate.*) Why, you must be Captain Hagberd himself.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*in the garden, both hands on the spade, peering, startled*)

Yes. I am.

HARRY (*slowly*)

You've been advertising in the papers for your son, I believe.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*off his guard, nervous*)

Yes. My only boy Harry. He's coming home tomorrow. (*Mumbles*) For a permanent stay.

HARRY (*surprised*)

The devil he is! (*Change of tone.*) My word! You've grown a beard like Father Christmas himself.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*impressively*)

Go your way. (*Waves one hand loftily.*) What's that to you? Go your way. (*Agitated*) Go your way.

HARRY

There, there. I am not trespassing in the street—where I stand—am I? Tell you what, I fancy there's something wrong about your news. Suppose you let me come in—for a quiet chat, you know.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*horrified*)

Let you—you come in!

HARRY (*persuasive*)

Because I could give you some real information about your son. The—very—latest—tip. If you care to hear.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*exploding*)

No! I don't care to hear. (*Begins to pace to and fro, spade on shoulder. Gesticulating with his other arm.*) Here's a fellow—a grinning town fellow, who says there's something wrong. (*Fiercely*) I have got more information than you're aware of. I have all the information I want. I have had it for years—for years—for years—enough to last me till tomorrow! Let you come in, indeed! What would Harry say?

(*BESSIE CARVIL enters at the door with a white wrap on her head and stands in her garden trying to see.*)

BESSIE

What's the matter?

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*beside himself*)
An information fellow. (*Stumbles.*)

HARRY (*putting out an arm to steady him, gravely*)

Here! Steady a bit! Seems to me somebody's been trying to get at you. (*Change of tone.*) Hullo! What's this rig you've got on? . . . Storm canvas coat, by George! (*He gives a big, throaty laugh.*) Well! You *are* a character!

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*daunted by the allusion, looks at coat*)

I—I wear it for—for the time being. Till—till—tomorrow. (*Shrinks away, spade in hand, to the door of his cottage.*)

BESSIE (*advancing*)

And what may you want, sir?

HARRY (*turning to BESSIE at once; easy manner*)

I'd like to know about this swindle that's going to be sprung on him. I didn't mean to startle the old man. You see, on my way here I dropped into a barber's to get a twopenny shave, and they told me there that he was something of a character. He has been a character all his life.

BESSIE (*very low, wondering*)

What swindle?

CAPTAIN HAGBERD

A grinning fellow! (*Makes a sudden dash indoors with the spade. Door slams. Lock clicks. Affected gurgling laugh within.*)

SCENE IV

BESSIE and HARRY. Later CAPTAIN HAGBERD *from window*

HARRY (*after a short silence*)

What on earth's upset him so? What's the meaning of all this fuss? He isn't always like that, is he?

BESSIE

I don't know who you are; but I may tell you that his mind has been troubled for years about an only son who ran away from home—a long time ago. Everybody knows that here.

HARRY (*thoughtful*)

Troubled — for years! (*Suddenly*) Well, I am the son.

BESSIE (*stepping back*)

You! . . . Harry!

HARRY (*amused, dry tone*)

Got hold of my name, eh? Been making friends with the old man?

BESSIE (*distressed*)

Yes . . . I . . . sometimes . . . (*Rapidly*) He's our landlord.

HARRY (*scornfully*)

Owens both them rabbit hutches, does he? Just a thing he'd be proud of. . . . (*Earnest*) And now you had better tell me all about that chap who's coming tomorrow. Know anything of him? I reckon there's more than one in that little game. Come! Out with it. (*Chaffing*) I don't take no—from women.

BESSIE (*bewildered*)

Oh! It's so difficult. . . . What had I better do? . . .

THE SMART SET

HARRY (*good-humored*)
Make a clean breast of it.

BESSIE (*wildly to herself*)
Impossible! (*Starts.*) You don't understand. I must think—see—try to—I—I must have time. Plenty of time.

HARRY
What for? Come. Two words. And don't be afraid for yourself. I ain't going to make it a police job. But it's the other fellow that'll get upset when he least expects it. There'll be some fun when he shows his mug here tomorrow. (*Snaps his fingers.*) I don't care that for the old man's dollars, but right is right. You shall see me put a head on that coon, whoever he is.

BESSIE (*wringing her hands slightly*)
What had I better do? (*Suddenly to HARRY*) It's you—you yourself that we—that he's waiting for. It's *you* who are to come tomorrow.

HARRY (*slowly*)
Oh! it's me! (*Perplexed*) There's something there I can't understand. I haven't written ahead or anything. It was my chum who showed me the advertisement with the old boy's address, this very morning—in London.

BESSIE (*anxious*)
How can I make it plain to you without . . . (*Bites her lip, embarrassed.*) Sometimes he talks so strangely.

HARRY (*expectant*)
Does he? What about?

BESSIE
Only you. And he will stand no contradicting.

HARRY
Stubborn. Eh? The old man hasn't changed much from what I can remember. (*They stand looking at each other helplessly.*)

BESSIE
He's made up his mind you would come back—tomorrow.

HARRY
I can't hang about here till morning. Got no money to get a bed. Not a cent. But why won't today do?

BESSIE
Because you've been too long away.

HARRY (*with force*)
Look here, they fairly drove me out. Poor mother nagged at me for being idle, and the old man said he would cut my soul out of my body rather than let me go to sea.

BESSIE (*murmuring*)
He can bear no contradicting.

HARRY (*continuing*)
Well, it looked as though he would do it, too. So I went. (*Moody*) It seems to me sometimes I was born to them by mistake—in that other rabbit hutch of a house.

BESSIE (*a little mocking*)
And where do you think you ought to have been born by rights?

HARRY
In the open—upon a beach—on a windy night.

BESSIE (*faintly*)
Ah!

HARRY
They were characters, both of them, by George! Shall I try the door?

BESSIE
Wait. I must explain to you why it is tomorrow.

HARRY
Aye. That you must, or—
(*A window in HAGBERD's cottage runs up.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD'S VOICE (*above*)
A — grinning — information — fellow coming to worry me in my own garden! What next?

(*The window rumbles down.*)

BESSIE
Yes. I must. (*Lays a hand on HARRY's sleeve.*) Let's get further off. Nobody ever comes this way after dark.

HARRY (*with a careless laugh*)
Aye. A good road for a walk with a girl.

(*They turn their backs on the audience and move up the stage slowly, close together. HARRY bends his head over BESSIE.*)

BESSIE'S VOICE (*beginning eagerly*)
People here somehow did not take kindly to him.

HARRY'S VOICE
Aye. Aye. I understand that.
(*They walk slowly back toward the front.*)

BESSIE
He was almost ready to starve himself for your sake.

HARRY
And I had to starve more than once for his whim.

BESSIE
I'm afraid you've a hard heart. (*Remains thoughtful.*)

HARRY
What for? For running away? (*Indignant*) Why, he wanted to make a blamed lawyer's clerk of me.
(*From here this scene goes on mainly near and about the street lamp.*)

BESSIE (*rousing herself*)
What are you? A sailor?

HARRY
Anything you like. (*Proudly*) Sailor enough to be worth my salt on board any craft that swims the seas.

BESSIE
He will never, never believe it. He mustn't be contradicted.

HARRY
Always liked to have his own way. And you've been encouraging him.

BESSIE (*earnestly*)
No—not in everything—not really!

HARRY (*with a vexed laugh*)
What about that pretty tomorrow

notion? I've a hungry chum in London—waiting for me.

BESSIE (*defending herself*)
Why should I make the poor old friendless man miserable? I thought you were far away. I thought you were dead. I didn't know but you had never been born. I—I— (*HARRY turns to her. She speaks desperately.*) It was easier to believe it myself. (*Carried away*) And, after all, it's true. It's come to pass. This is the tomorrow we've been waiting for.

HARRY (*half perfunctorily*)
Aye. Anybody can see that your heart is as soft as your voice.

BESSIE (*as if unable to keep back the words*)
I didn't think you would have noticed my voice.

HARRY (*already inattentive*)
H'm. Dashed scrape. This is a queer tomorrow, without any sort of today, as far as I can see. (*Resolutely*) I must try the door.

BESSIE
Well—try, then.

HARRY (*from the gate looking over his shoulder at BESSIE*)
He ain't likely to fly out at me, is he? I would be afraid of laying my hands on him. The chaps are always telling me I don't know my own strength.

BESSIE (*in front*)
He's the most harmless creature that ever—

HARRY
You wouldn't say so if you had seen him walloping me with a hard leather strap. (*Walking up the garden*) I haven't forgotten it in sixteen long years. (*Rat-tat-tat twice.*) Hallo, dad. (*BESSIE intensely expectant. Rat-tat-tat.*) Hullo, dad—let me in. I am your own Harry. Straight. Your son Harry come back home—a day too soon.
(*The window above rumbles up.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*leaning out, aiming with the spade*)

Aha!

BESSIE (*warningly*)

Look out, Harry! (*The spade falls.*)
Are you hurt? (*The window rumbles down.*)

HARRY (*in the distance*)

Only grazed my hat.

BESSIE

Thank God! (*Intensely*) What'll he do now?

HARRY (*coming forward, slamming the gate behind him*)

Just like old times. Nearly licked the life out of me for wanting to go away; and now I come back, he shies a confounded old shovel at my head. (*Fumes.Laughs a little.*) I wouldn't care, only poor little Ginger—Ginger's my chum up in London—he will starve while I walk back all the way from here. (*Faces BESSIE blankly.*) I spent my last twopence on a shave. Out of respect for the old man.

BESSIE

I think, if you let me, I could manage to talk him round in a week, maybe.

(*A muffled periodical bellowing had been heard faintly for some time.*)

HARRY (*on the alert*)

What's this? Who's making this row? Hark! Bessie, Bessie—it's in your house, I believe.

BESSIE (*without stirring, drearily*)

It's for me.

HARRY (*discreetly, whispering*)

Good voice for a ship's deck in a squall. Your husband? (*Steps out of lamplight.*)

BESSIE

No. My father. He's blind. (*Pause*)
I'm not married.

(*The bellows grow louder.*)

HARRY

Oh, I say. What's up? Who's murdering him?

BESSIE (*calmly*)

I expect he's finished his tea. (*The bellowing continues regularly.*)

HARRY

Hadn't you better see to it? You'll have the whole town coming out here presently. (*BESSIE moves off.*) I say! (*BESSIE stops.*) Couldn't you scare up some bread and butter for me from that tea? I'm hungry. Had no breakfast.

BESSIE (*starts off at the word "hungry," dropping to the ground the white woollen shawl*)

I won't be a minute. Don't go away.

HARRY (*alone; picks up the shawl absently, and, looking at it spread out in his hands, pronounces slowly*)

A—dam'—silly—scrape. (*Pause. Throws the shawl on his arm. Strolls up and down. Mutters.*) No money to get back. (*Louder*) Silly little Ginger'll think I've got hold of the pieces and given an old shipmate the go-by. One good shove—(*Makes motion of bursting in door with his shoulders*)—would burst that door in—I bet. (*Looks about.*) I wonder where the nearest bobby is? No. They would want to bundle me neck and crop into chokey. (*Shudders.*) Perhaps. It makes me dog sick to think of being locked up. Haven't got the nerve. Not for prison. (*Leans against lamppost.*) And not a cent for my fare. I wonder if that girl now—

BESSIE (*coming hastily forward, a plate with bread and meat in her hand*)

I didn't take time to get anything else.

HARRY (*beginning to eat*)

You're not standing treat to a beggar. My dad is a rich man—you know.

BESSIE (*plate in hand*)

You resemble your father.

HARRY

I was the very image of him in face from a boy—(*Eats*)—and that's about as far as it goes. He was always one of your domestic characters. He looked sick when he had to go to sea for a

fortnight's trip. (*Laughs*) He was all for house and home.

BESSIE

And you? Have you never wished for a home? (*She goes off with the empty plate and puts it down hastily on CARVIL'S bench—out of sight.*)

HARRY (*left in front*)

Home! If I found myself shut up in what the old man calls a home, I would kick it down about my ears on the third day—or else go to bed and die before the week was out. Die in a house—ough!

BESSIE (*returning; stops and speaks from the garden railing*)

And where is it that you would wish to die?

HARRY

In the bush, in the sea, on some blamed mountain top for choice. No such luck, though, I suppose.

BESSIE (*from a distance*)

Would that be luck?

HARRY

Yes! For them that make the whole world their home.

BESSIE (*coming forward shyly*)

The world's a cold home—they say.

HARRY (*a little gloomy*)

So it is. When a nian's done for.

BESSIE

You see! (*Taunting*) And a ship's not so very big, after all.

HARRY

No. But the sea is great. And then what of the ship? You love her and leave her, Miss—Bessie's your name—isn't it? . . . I like that name.

BESSIE

You like my name! I wonder you remembered it. . . . That's why, I suppose.

HARRY (*a slight swagger in his voice*)

What's the odds! As long as a fellow has lived. And a voyage isn't a marriage—as we sailors say.

BESSIE

So you're not married—(*Movement of HARRY*)—to any ship!

HARRY (*with a soft laugh*)

Ship! I've loved and left more of them than I can remember. I've been nearly everything you can think of but a tinker or a soldier; I've been a boundary rider; I've sheared sheep and humped my swag and harpooned a whale; I've rigged ships and skinned dead bullocks and prospected for gold—and turned my back on more money than the old man would have scraped together in his whole life.

BESSIE (*thoughtfully*)

I could talk him over in a week. . . .

HARRY (*negligently*)

I dare say you could. (*Joking*) I don't know but what I could make shift to wait if you only promise to talk to me now and then. I've grown quite fond of your voice. I like a right woman's voice.

BESSIE (*with averted head*)

Quite fond. (*Sharply*) Talk! Nonsense! Much you'd care. (*Businesslike*) Of course I would have to sometimes. . . . (*Thoughtful again*) Yes. In a week—if only I knew you would try to get on with him afterward.

HARRY (*leaning against the lamppost; growls through his teeth*)

More humoring. Ah! Well, no! (*Hums significantly*)

Oh, oh, oh, Rio, . . .

And fare thee well

My bonnie young girl,

We're bound for Rio Grande.

BESSIE (*shivering*)

What's this?

HARRY

Why! The chorus of an up-anchor tune. Kiss and go. A deep water ship's

good-bye. . . . You are cold. Here's that thing of yours I've picked up and forgot there on my arm. Turn round a bit. So. (*Wraps her up—commanding.*) Hold the ends together in front.

BESSIE (*softly*)

A week is not so very long.

HARRY (*violently*)

You think that I— (*Stops with a side-long look at her.*) I can't dodge about in ditches and live on air and water. Can I? I haven't any money—you know.

BESSIE

He's been scraping and saving up for years. All he has is for you, and perhaps . . .

HARRY (*interrupting*)

Yes. If I come to sit on it like a blamed toad in a hole. Thank you.

BESSIE (*angrily*)

What did you come for, then?

HARRY (*promptly*)

For five quid—(*Pause*)—after a jolly good spree.

BESSIE (*scathingly*)

You and that—that—chum of yours have been drinking.

HARRY (*laughing*)

Don't fly out, Miss Bessie—dear. Ginger's not a bad little chap. Can't take care of himself, though. Blind three days. (*Serious*) Don't think I am given that way. Nothing and nobody can get over me unless I like. I can be as steady as a rock.

BESSIE (*murmuring*)

Oh! I don't think you are bad.

HARRY (*approvingly*)

You're right there. (*Impulsive*) Ask the girls all over— (*Checks himself*) Ginger, he's long-headed, too, in his way—mind you. He sees the paper this morning, and says he to me: "Hallo! Look at that, Harry—loving

parent—that's five quid sure." So we scraped all our pockets for the fare. . . .

BESSIE (*unbelieving*)

You came here for that?

HARRY (*surprised*)

What else would I want here? Five quid isn't much to ask for—once in sixteen years. (*Through his teeth with a sidelong look at her*) And now I am ready to go—for my fare.

BESSIE (*clapping her hands*)

Who ever heard a man talk like this before? I can't believe you mean it.

HARRY

What? That I would go? You just try and see.

BESSIE (*disregarding him*)

Don't you care for anyone? Didn't you ever want anyone in the world to care for you?

HARRY

In the world! (*Boastful*) There's hardly a place you can go in the world where you wouldn't find somebody that did care for Harry Hagberd. (*Pause*) I'm not of the sort that go about skulking under false names.

BESSIE

Somebody—that means a woman.

HARRY

Well! And if it did?

BESSIE (*unsteadily*)

Oh, I see how it is. You get round them with your soft speeches your promises, and then . . .

HARRY (*violently*)

Never!

BESSIE (*startled, steps back*)

Ah—you never . . .

HARRY (*calm*)

Never yet told a lie to a woman.

BESSIE

What lie?

HARRY

Why, the lie that comes glib to a man's tongue. None of that for me. I leave the sneaking off to them soft-spoken chaps you're thinking of. No! If you love me you take me. And if you take me—why, then, the capstan song of deep water ships is sure to settle it all some fine day.

BESSIE (*after a short pause, with an effort*)
It's like your ships, then.

HARRY (*amused*)

Exactly, up to now. Or else I wouldn't be here in a silly fix.

BESSIE (*with assumed indifference*)
Perhaps it's because you've never yet met— (*Her voice fails.*)

HARRY (*negligently*)

Maybe. And perhaps never shall. . . . What's the odds? It's the looking for a thing. . . . No matter. I love them all—ships and women. The scrapes they got me into, and the scrapes they got me out of—my word! I say, Miss Bessie, what are you thinking of?

BESSIE (*lifting her head*)

That you are supposed never to tell a lie.

HARRY

Never, eh? You wouldn't be that hard on a chap.

BESSIE (*recklessly*)

Never to a woman, I mean.

HARRY

Well, no. (*Serious*) Never anything that matters. (*Aside*) I don't seem to get any nearer to my railway fare. (*Leans wearily against the lamppost with far-off look. Bessie at the left, looks at him.*)

BESSIE

Now what are you thinking of?

HARRY (*turning his head, staring at her*)

Well, I was thinking what a fine figure of a girl you are.

BESSIE (*looking away a moment*)

Is that true, or is it only one of them that don't matter?

HARRY (*laughing a little*)

No! No! That's true. Haven't you ever been told that before? The men . . .

BESSIE

I hardly speak to a soul from year's end to year's end. Father's blind. He don't like strangers, and he can't bear to think of me out of his call. Nobody comes near us much.

HARRY (*absent-minded*)

Blind—ah! Of course.

BESSIE

For years and years . . .

HARRY (*commiserating*)

For years and years. In one of them hutches. You are a good daughter. (*Brightening up*) A fine girl altogether. You seem the sort that makes a good chum to a man in a fix. And there's not a man in this whole town who found you out? I can hardly credit it, Miss Bessie. (*Bessie shakes her head.*) Man I said! (*Contemptuous*) A lot of tame rabbits in hutches I call them. . . . (*Breaks off*) I say, when's the last train up to London? Can you tell me?

BESSIE (*gazing at him steadily*)

What for? You've no money.

HARRY

That's just it. (*Leans back against post again.*) Hard luck. (*Insinuating*) But there was never a time in all my travels that a woman of the right sort did not turn up to help me out of a fix. I don't know why. It's perhaps because they know without telling that I love them all. (*Playful*) I've almost fallen in love with you, Miss Bessie.

BESSIE (*with an unsteady laugh*)

Why! How you talk! You haven't even seen my face properly. (*One step toward HARRY as if compelled.*)

THE SMART SET

HARRY (*bending forward gallantly*)

A little pale. It suits some. (*Puts out his hand, catches hold of her arm. Draws her to him.*) Let's see. . . . Yes, it suits you. (*It's a moment before BESSIE puts up her hands, palms out, and turns away her head.*)

BESSIE (*whispering*)

Don't. (*Struggles a little. Released, stands averted.*)

HARRY

No offense. (*Stands, back to audience, looking at HAGBERD'S cottage.*)

BESSIE (*alone in front; faces audience; whispers*)

My voice—my figure—my heart—my face. . . .

(*A silence. BESSIE'S face gradually lights up. Directly HARRY speaks, expression of hopeful attention.*)

HARRY (*from the railing*)

The old man seems to have gone to sleep waiting for that tomorrow of his.

BESSIE

Come away. He sleeps very little.

HARRY (*strolling down*)

He has taken an everlasting jamming hitch round the whole business. (*Vexed*) Cast it loose who may. (*Contemptuous exclamation*) Tomorrow. Pooh! It'll be just another mad today.

BESSIE

It's the brooding over his hope that's done it. People teased him so. It's his fondness for you that's troubled his mind.

HARRY

Aye. A confounded shovel on the head. The old man had always a queer way of showing his fondness for me.

BESSIE

A hopeful, troubled, expecting old man—left alone—all alone.

HARRY (*in a lower tone*)

Did he ever tell you what mother died of?

BESSIE

Yes. (*A little bitter*) From impatience.

HARRY (*making a gesture with his arm; speaks vaguely but with feeling*)

I believe you have been very good to my old man. . . .

BESSIE (*tentative*)

Wouldn't you try to be a son to him?

HARRY (*angrily*)

No contradicting; is that it? You seem to know my dad pretty well. And so do I. He's dead nuts on having his own way—and I've been used to have my own too long. It's the deuce of a fix.

BESSIE

How could it hurt you not to contradict him for a while—and perhaps in time you would get used . . .

HARRY (*interrupting sulkily*)

I ain't accustomed to knuckle under. There's a pair of us. Hagberds both. I ought to be thinking of my train.

BESSIE (*earnestly*)

Why? There's no need. Let us get away up the road a little.

HARRY (*through his teeth*)

And no money for the fare. (*Looks up.*) Sky's come overcast. Black, too. It'll be a wild, windy night—to walk the highroad on. But I and wild nights are old friends wherever the free wind blows.

BESSIE (*entreating*)

No need. No need. (*Looks apprehensively at HAGBERD'S cottage. Takes a couple of steps up as if to draw HARRY further off. HARRY follows. Both stop.*)

HARRY (*after waiting*)

What about this tomorrow whim?

BESSIE

Leave that to me. Of course all his fancies are not mad. They aren't. (*Pause*) Most people in this town would think what he had set his mind on quite sensible. If he ever talks to you of

it, don't contradict him. It would—it would be dangerous.

HARRY (*surprised*)
What would he do?

BESSIE
He would—I don't know—something rash.

HARRY (*startled*)
To himself?

BESSIE
No. It'd be against you—I fear.

HARRY (*sullen*)
Let him.

BESSIE
Never. Don't quarrel. But perhaps he won't even try to talk to you of it. (*Thinking aloud*) Who knows what I can do with him in a week? I can, I can, I can—I must.

HARRY
Come—what's this sensible notion of his that I mustn't quarrel about?

BESSIE (*turning to HARRY, calm, forcible*)

If I make him once see that you've come back, he will be as sane as you or I. All his mad notions will be gone. But that other is quite sensible. And you mustn't quarrel over it.

(*She moves up to the back of the stage. HARRY follows a little behind, away from the audience.*)

HARRY'S VOICE (*calm*)
Let's hear what it is.
(*The voices cease. Action visible as before. HARRY steps back and walks hastily down. BESSIE, at his elbow, follows with her hands clasped.*)
(*Loud burst of voice.*)

HARRY (*raving to and fro*)
No! Expects me—a home. Who wants his home? . . . What I want is hard work, or an all-fired racket, or more room than there is in the whole of England. Expects me! A man like me—for his rotten money—there ain't enough money in the world to turn me into a blamed tame rabbit in a hutch. (*He stops suddenly before BESSIE, his*

arms crossed on his breast. Violently)
Don't you see it?

BESSIE (*terrified, stammering faintly*)
Yes. Yes. Don't look at me like this. (*Sudden scream*) Don't quarrel with him. He's mad!

HARRY (*in headlong utterance*)
Mad! Not he. He likes his own way. Tie me up by the neck here. Here! Ha! Ha! Ha! (*Louder*) And the whole world is not a bit too big for me to spread my elbows in, I can tell you—what's your name—Bessie. (*Rising scorn*) Marry! Wants me to marry and settle. . . . (*Scathingly*) And as likely as not he has looked out the girl, too—dash my soul. Talked to you about it—did he? And do you happen to know the Judy—may I ask?

(*A window in HAGBERD's cottage runs up. They start and stand still.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*above, beginning slowly*)

A grinning information fellow from a crazy town. (*His voice changes*) Bessie, I see you. . . .

BESSIE (*shrill*)
Captain Hagberd! Say nothing. You don't understand. For heaven's sake don't.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD
Send him away this minute, or I will tell Harry. They know nothing of Harry in this crazy town. Harry's coming home tomorrow. Do you hear? One day more!
(*Silence.*)

HARRY (*muttering*)
Well!—he is a character.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*chuckling softly*)
Never you fear! The boy shall marry you. (*Sudden anger*) He'll have to. I'll make him. Or, if not—(*Furious*)—I'll cut him off with a shilling, and leave everything to you. Jackanapes! Let him starve!

(*The window rumbles down.*)

THE SMART SET

HARRY (*slowly*)

So it's you—the girl. It's you! Now I begin to see. . . . By heavens, you have a heart as soft as your woman's voice.

BESSIE (*half averted, her face in her hands*)
You see! Don't come near me.

HARRY (*making a step toward her*)

I must have another look at your pale face.

BESSIE (*turning unexpectedly and pushing him with both hands; HARRY staggers back and stands still; BESSIE, fiercely*)
Go away.

HARRY (*watching her*)

Directly. But women always had to get me out of my scrapes. I am a beggar now, and you must help me out of my scrape.

BESSIE (*who at the word "beggar" had begun fumbling in the pocket of her dress, speaks wildly*)

Here it is. Take it. Don't look at me. Don't speak to me!

HARRY (*swaggering up under the lamp looking at the coin in his palm*)

Half a quid. . . . My fare!

BESSIE (*hands clenched*)

Why are you still here?

HARRY

Well, you *are* a fine figure of a girl. My word. I've a good mind to stop—for a week.

BESSIE (*with pain and shame*)

Oh! . . . What are you waiting for? If I had more money I would give it all, all. I would give everything I have to make you go—to make you forget you had ever heard my voice and seen my face. (*Covers her face with her hands.*)

HARRY (*sombre, watches her*)

No fear! I haven't forgotten a single one of you in the world. Some've given me more than money. No matter. You

can't buy me in—and you can't buy yourself out . . .

(*He strides toward her. Seizes her arms. A short struggle. BESSIE gives way. Her hair falls loose. HARRY kisses her forehead, cheeks, lips, then releases her. BESSIE staggers against the railing.*)

(*Exit HARRY; measured walk without haste.*)

BESSIE (*staring eyes, hair loose, back against the railing; calls out*)

Harry! (*Gathers up her skirts and runs a little way*) Come back, Harry. (*Staggers forward against the lamppost*) Harry! (*Much lower*) Harry! (*In a whisper*) Take me with you. (*Begins to laugh, at first faintly, then louder.*)

(*The window rumbles up, and CAPTAIN HAGBERD'S chuckle mingles with BESSIE'S laughter, which abruptly stops.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*chuckling; speaking cautiously*)

Is he gone yet, that information fellow? Do you see him anywhere, my dear?

BESSIE (*low and stammering*)

N-no, no! (*Tollers away from the lamppost*) I don't see him.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*anxious*)

A grinning vagabond, my dear. Good girl. It's you who drove him away. Good girl.

(*The stage gradually darkens.*)

BESSIE

Go in; be quiet! You have done harm enough.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*alarmed*)

Why? Do you hear him yet, my dear?

BESSIE (*sobbing drooping against the railings*)

No! No! I don't. I don't hear him any more.

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*triumphant*)

Now we shall be all right, my dear, till our Harry comes home tomorrow. (*Affected gurgling laugh.*)

BESSIE (*distracted*)

Be quiet. Shut yourself in. You will make me mad. (*Losing control of herself, repeats with rising inflexion*) You make me mad. (*With despair*) There is no tomorrow! (*Sinks to the ground near the middle railings. Low sobs.*)
(*The stage darkens perceptibly.*)

CAPTAIN HAGBERD (*above, in a voice suddenly dismayed and shrill*)
What! What do you say, my dear?

No tomorrow? (*Broken, very feebly*)
No—tomorrow? (*The window runs down.*)

CARVIL (*heard within, muffled bellowing*)
Bessie—Bessie—Bessie—Bessie— (*At the first call BESSIE springs up and begins to stumble blindly toward the door. A faint flash of lightning, followed by a very low rumble of thunder.*) You—Bessie!

CURTAIN.



PORTRAIT OF A GIRL

By W. G. Tinckom-Fernandez

ABOUT whose proud and famous name, this day,
Are you adream?
Your silken lashes seem
Heavy with secrets your red lips would say:
Around your placid brow what reveries play
Their Merlin tune,
In this light-hearted noon
Of girlhood, with its green and golden May?

II

Within your gentle, rosy-fingered hands,
Where lilies sleep,
Great destinies you keep—
Thrice happy he who kneels to your commands!
From that gold disarray, your crown, what strands
Shall gleam anew
Some distant day, when you
Wrap round a smaller head these fillet bands!

III

What though the stealthy years encroach, you'll wait
With your slow smile,
A brief, imperious while,
Dreaming white dreams till Love smiles from the gate—
Then, in the darkling years, may kindly Fate
This solace lend
My dim eyes, and fend
That gracious, gradual end to youth's estate!

THE NEW MARCUS AURELIUS

By Achmed Abdullah

A MAN of tact and moral principles should not complain of his mistress's infidelity to her husband. He should rather bear such unhappiness in silent and dignified woe.

Life is not only painful and tiresome, but also expensive and extremely wasteful of time.

Never judge people according to their clothes. Even a man who wears a velvet necktie can be a human being.

A girl who has a different lover for every day in the week is sure to be methodical and trustworthy; but if she has more than seven lovers she is flighty and frivolous.

The fact that you despise Shakespeare does not prove conclusively that you are a dramatic genius.

Poverty is not a crime, but it usually leads to it.



THE AWAKENING

By Aloysius Coll

SPECTER in the solitude,
Shadow of the shower,
Bramble bush and tanglewood,
Sorrow for an hour;
Terror of the thunder,
Deeper than the sea;
A dream, a doubt, a fear, a blunder—
Love o'ershadowed me!

Comrade in a wilderness,
Sunlight on a flower,
Brother for the brotherless,
Crisis of an hour;
Music of the thunder,
Grandeur of the sea;
A risk, a dare, a joy, a wonder—
Love enfolded me!

LE DOIGT DE DIEU

Par Florian-Parmentier

IL y avait, ce jour-là, grande animation dans la ville de Nicomédie. Mais, sur un ordre des procureurs, la milice fit soudain prendre aux attelages un chemin détourné et refoula le peuple en hâte contre les maisons.

Une longue procession sortait du Temple de Cybèle et s'avancait vers le forum. Des musiciens sacrés, aux cheveux flottants sur les épaules et aux vêtements couverts de pierres, ouvraient la marche. Le premier rang soufflait dans des trompettes stridentes. Puis, brusquement, il se taisait pour laisser entendre la musique bizarre que les autres tiraient du psaltérion et de la syrinx et que rythmaient les tambourahs et les cymbales. Ils étaient suivis du cortège des prêtres, revêtus d'habits pontificaux et coiffés de la tiare. Derrière eux, les prêtresses, avec leurs lèvres rougies et leurs yeux allongés à la poudre d'antimoine, ressemblaient à des danseuses. Sous des sortes de chasubles à longues manches, venaient ensuite les hiérodules, promenant avec solennité, dans des édicules portatifs, toutes les idoles du temple. Leur troupe était encadrée par une double file d'eunuques desservants, qui élevaient au-dessus de leurs têtes de crépitantes torches de pin. Enfin, s'avançaient dans leurs entraves des prisonniers des deux sexes, que les flagellants menaçaient de leurs lanières garnies de boules de plomb. Ils furent accueillis par une immense clameur, qui sembla comme tailladée par les coups de sifflet de la populace. C'étaient des chrétiens que l'on traînait sur la place publique pour les forcer, comme l'ordonnait l'édit de l'empereur Maximin, à abjurer leur foi et à sacrifier aux dieux de leurs pères.

A mesure qu'ils passaient, la foule s'en-

gouffrait dans la rue pour les suivre. On arriva ainsi sur le forum, où les divinités furent rangées sur une ligne—le dieu Adar-Samdan et la déesse Anat au centre—afin qu'un certain nombre de chrétiens pût être amené à la fois devant leurs autels. Ceux qui, paralysés par la crainte ou affaiblis par les privations, consentaient à faire le simulacre d'un sacrifice, étaient aussitôt rendus à la liberté. On entassait les autres sur un char pour les mener au supplice.

Soudain, des premiers rangs des curieux, une rumeur s'éleva pour imposer silence aux bavards. Il y eut un mouvement général de curiosité: les bouches se turent, les cous se tendirent. Du char des condamnés une fraîche voix de femme s'élevait, enthousiaste, éclatante, proclamant la gloire du Christ, exhortant les infidèles à se convertir, appelant sur eux les lumières d'en-haut.

Tous se haussaient pour la voir, et bientôt un murmure se propagea:

—Barbe! C'est Barbe, la fille du sutfête Dioscore!

La stupeur était grande, car on ne comprenait pas comment la fille d'un homme si puissant avait pu être dénoncée et arrêtée.

Alors, redoutant que les paroles d'une chrétienne de haute naissance ne fissent une trop forte impression sur les esprits, les officiers de police ordonnèrent à leur cavalerie de repousser la cohue. Et Barbe, bâillonnée, puis attachée, à peine vêtue, seule et bien en vue, sur un chariot, fut promenée à travers la ville, avant de comparaître devant un tribunal extraordinaire. . . .

Comme le peuple se pressait vers le Palais de Justice, une horrible petite

vieille se glissa auprès d'un jeune et beau chevalier, et l'attira à l'écart. C'était une sorcière égyptienne. Elle était ensevelie sous un amas de guenilles et l'on ne voyait d'elle que deux yeux verts dans un morceau de peau, fripée.

—Salut, dit-elle, noble Cyriax. Ne me jette pas ce regard courroucé, et ne va point surtout accuser mes philtres d'être sans pouvoir sur l'objet de ton amour. L'eunuque que j'avais gagné à ta cause n'est plus de service aux ergastules. Il n'a donc pu exécuter mes instructions. Mais ne te désespère pas. J'ai un moyen sûr d'obliger la fille de Dioscore à devenir ton épouse. Dans une heure la sentence de mort aura été prononcée contre elle. Hâte-toi de faire atteler un char et va poster tes esclaves près du billot d'exécution. Le bourreau a reçu dix mille sesterces, que j'ai prélevés sur ta cassette. Il prolongera ses préparatifs jusqu'à ce que l'enlèvement soit une chose accomplie.

Cependant, le tribunal s'était réuni. Les assistants se disaient à voix basse leur étonnement de voir siéger le suffète parmi les juges, à la droite du préteur. On crut d'abord qu'il était venu prendre la défense de sa fille. Mais un frémissement courut dans l'auditoire quand il se leva pour déclarer qu'il avait lui-même dénoncé Barbe au proconsul Marcien, voulant ainsi donner un haut exemple de soumission aux lois de l'Empire. Il ne pouvait admettre, disait-il, que la fille d'un suffète étalât aux yeux de tous le spectacle honteux de l'apostasie, du mépris des institutions et de la désobéissance aux ordres paternels. Il avait, quant à lui, rempli son devoir de père en lui offrant de la marier à un chevalier issu d'une des plus considérables familles de Nicomédie, au jeune et noble Cyriax. Mais la misérable enfant avait refusé un parti si brillant pour se livrer tout entière, avec un aveuglement criminel, aux œuvres maléfiques de sa nouvelle religion. Elle ne méritait donc pas la clémence des juges; et, si elle devait persister à faire le désespoir de son père, mieux valait pour elle, pour lui et pour la Société, que sa dernière heure sonnât sur le champ.

Un langage si ferme souleva les

applaudissements de quelques fanatiques. Puis on amena Barbe, les poignets liés en croix sur la poitrine. A toutes les questions qu'on lui posa elle répondit invariablement: "Je suis chrétienne." Son père fut le premier à témoigner son impatience. "Recourons à des moyens plus énergiques," dit-il. Et il réclama contre elle la flagellation, les ongles de fer, les tenailles coupantes. Les tourmenteurs s'approchèrent. Elle se laissa déchirer sans pousser un cri.

Alors un scribe lut le jugement, rédigé d'avance sur un papyrus, et qui la condamnait à mort. . . .

Maintenant, le peuple s'amassait sur la place des exécutions.

Tandis que le bourreau remuait son arsenal, aiguissait sa hache, dévissait des écrous, la vieille Egyptienne murmurait à l'oreille de Cyriax:

—Donne le signal qui doit délivrer ta fiancée. Ne perds plus un instant! car le Dieu des chrétiens est irrité, et il y a de mauvais présages dans l'air.

En effet, des nuages noirs s'amoncelaient au-dessus des têtes. Une inquiétude passa soudain dans les dattiers d'une terrasse voisine.

Cependant, les aides s'apprétaient à introduire le cou de Barbe dans l'anneau fatal, lorsque les esclaves de Cyriax, sur un signe de leur maître, se précipitèrent vers la condamnée. Mais, à la même minute, Dioscore, exaspéré par tant de lenteurs, avait bondi inopinément sur le bourreau. Il lui avait arraché la hache d'entre les mains, et, en cet instant, il la faisait tourner avec furie.

Alors un prodige du ciel fit jaillir de mille poitrines un long cri d'horreur. La neu venait brusquement de se déchirer. Et, de cette plaie sanglante, on avait vu tomber sur le suffète un énorme globe de feu.

Quand les curieux s'approchèrent, ils virent un monceau de cendres à côté du corps décapité de la jeune fille.

A trois pas, un esclave de Cyriax, figé comme une statue, tenait à hauteur de son épaule la tête sanguinolente, qui lui avait sauté au visage. Mais quelqu'un l'ayant bousculé, il ne fut plus à son tour qu'un amas de poussière. . . .

A PLAY TO INTEREST YOU

By George Jean Nathan

WHY these ceaseless lamentations, these interminable hubbubboos, these vociferous ululations, on the part of our dramatic critics over the mediocre quality of the plays currently visible on the American stage? Why the correlative pleadings and deplorings and apologies that, because of such dramatic famine, their critiques must inevitably be of analogous dullness: that "how can one write entertainingly—even write at all—when there is so little of interest, indeed, so little of anything, to write about?" Is this as it should be? Is this fair to the public, fair to the drama? I think not.

As I see it, it is a critic's duty, above everything else, to interest *his* audience whether the play he is reviewing interested *its* audience or not. Hence, when there is no play of interest to set the pen to, it appears to me to be the critic's duty to create such a play. Certainly, this is the least any respectable critic can do. If not, then what the good of critics? Of course, if the critic be a "destructive" critic—like myself, for example—instead of one of the benign "constructive" mountebanks, those bizarre minstrels who bore peaceful managers and rich playwrights and poor actors and a helpless public with sapient twattle anent technique, the Aristotelian unities and other anachronistic wisdoms, that is a different matter. The so-called destructive critic, who, by the way, is regarded as destructive chiefly by the toothless professors of the traditions and the kindly conservative quacks who believe that constructive criticism means that only the good in drama should be given attention and the bad passed over (as if the bad were not the

one and only element that intelligently called for criticism!)—the destructive critic occupies an honest and a helpful position in the community. He is to drama what vaccine is to smallpox. He makes a bit of a mess, to be sure, and a lot of children kick around with a vague idea that they ought to combat him, and he makes a great many persons sore, but he does not fail of his purpose.

He is, true enough, viewed as a low dog, a rootbeer drinker, a debaucher of innocent country maidens directly they arrive in the city, a stealer of Swedish immigrant girls; some of the more bellicose pretenders whom he has destroyed sometimes even write to the theatrical papers and succeed in proving that he is an intelligent fellow; and he has as few friends as a "constructive" critic out of a job—but he does not fail! Of course, he fails so far as the American theater and its managers and playwrights and actors go, but that is a small matter and of no importance. The task of convincing the latter is well and effectively looked after by his "constructive" brethren, a fact certainly substantiated by the jejune condition of the American theater as it still stands today. But where he does not fail is in the rearousing of an interest in the theater in the great force of people who—sickened by the current standards of the theater and, further still, by the dunderheaded pamphleteers who believe they are helping that theater by the display of a large altruism and great forgiving spirit—have temporarily deserted the acted for the printed drama. Where he does not fail is in persuading these people, in large numbers, to revisit the theater, not, assuredly, in the dim

hope of seeing good plays, but to observe for themselves that the plays are actually still as bad as the destructive critic said they were—something of which the charitable folk might possibly, if only for a moment, have been skeptical.

There is one of the many ways in which your destructive critic cannot fail finally to assist in the construction of the better theater of the future! By the adroit exercise of a warring and outrageous tongue, he offends persons who believe they like to think for themselves to such a degree that they hasten to the theater to determine whether he knows what he is talking about. Having discovered thereby that he does, and in the process of so doing having been encouraged by the critic to imagine that they have thought the thing out for themselves (thus being won by the critic through flattery), they subsequently remain away from the theater—not for a week or a month or a year as before—but for good and all. And so, gradually by convincing the audiences that it is their distinct duty both to themselves and to the theater steadfastly to stay away from the theater, the destructive critic may ultimately serve his end in compelling the inauguration of a better grade of drama. Or, if “compel” be too muscular a word, then at least in ultimately bringing producers, playwrights and actors to realize that unless better stuffs are forthcoming from them, they will have to close up shop—and go back to work.

The quality of theatrical fare offered the public during the last six weeks has, with the small exceptions hereinafter with due appreciation to be noted, been of the species that has become so dear to the hearts of the moving picture oligarchs. Almost every time a new play is produced in these days, the moving picture business takes another big jump. It is not the moving pictures that are making “inroads” into the drama, but the drama itself! In view, therefore, of the absence of any play of sufficient novelty, bounce, imagination, whimsy and originality during the period which this critique must cover, my personally held laws of equity toward my

own public demand of me, as I have said, that I, for the purposes of reviewing, create such a play for them.

Wherefore:

The most interesting presentation of the recent weeks is a new American play * designated as “a philosophical spectacle through unphilosophical spectacles” and entitled “As We See It.” Although the author admits that he can read French and German, both the idea and theme of his play are nevertheless original. The thesis of the play suggests the philosophy that it is given only to youth to be an accurate critic of life, that only youth may see the world and the world’s peoples and ways for what they really are, for what they really stand for, for what, in the end, they are found to have been. It suggests that just as a too intimate and too protracted contact with anything naturally blinds one to the exact values of that object, so does so-called experience, the partner of age, dull the worldly perceptions. It suggests that youth’s eyes sweeping the world with dreaming alarums, filled now with the dust of crumbling castles, now with glinting light of trivial triumphs—that youth’s eyes alone appraise the world truly. It suggests that, in the eventual deduction, the complete lack of knowledge on the part of a child and the sum total of experience on the part of an old man cause both the child and the old man to see things in much the same way: that when we grow old we begin again to see the world as we saw it through the eyes of childhood. The play, which seeks to convey this idea in terms of what may be called ocular satire, is divided into three acts, thus accounted for on the program:

ACT I

The audience is asked to travel back across the canyon of mounting years and to imagine itself to be again little children, little boys and girls of twelve, wide-eyed and wondering in the presence of the great, fresh, new world.

ACT II

The audience is asked now to imagine

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itself as it was at twenty-one and in the golden years that glistened after on toward the frontier of thirty.

ACT III

The audience is asked now to imagine itself in old age—or, at least, in the years to the thitherward side of fifty-five, the autumn time of life's late October.

The first act shows the world as it is seen through the eyes of a child of twelve—the audience being the child, the audience's eyes being the child's eyes. Thus we see Uncle Jim, our favorite uncle who brings us candy and tells us such funny stories, as seven feet high—one of the biggest men in the whole world—almost as tall, indeed, as those great heroes, the Policeman, the Fireman, the Iceman, the President of the United States, Diamond Dick and Papa, all of whom would seem to be on very intimate terms, especially the President and Papa. The Bank President, the World-Famous Scientist, the Great Scholar and the Celebrated Artist are all little fellows, not more than three feet tall at most. In fact, in the scene between the Great Scholar and Diamond Dick, the latter is demonstrated to be so clearly superior in every conceivable way to the former, that the very idea of the Great Scholar's effrontery in hazarding to debate with Diamond Dick makes everybody laugh. The audience sees itself in the person of a little boy, normal in every respect save that his biceps, which his father is urged to feel every few minutes so as to note their constant surprising development, are the biceps of a young pugilist; it sees itself in the person of a little girl whose doll, instead of being only a doll as her Kindergarten Teacher (as tall and imposing and regal a creature as there is in this world) has tried to convince her, is a real living little laughing and crying baby. The little unconscious love scene between the boy and girl at the end of the act, when their respective parents come to fetch them and separate them for the whole long summer (it is in the late spring of the year), with Diamond Dick covertly tugging at the boy's coat and whispering

to him "not to be such a sissy—what'll the gang think of him?", with its gift of a stick of peppermint candy to the girl and the immediate regret and maneuvering to get it back again, has the ring of genuine reminiscence. So, too, has an earlier scene in which the little boy tries to deduce some way in which to get rid of his hated enemy, his bed, which constantly stares him in the face from the window of the second story of his home; and so, too, have the scenes in which even the most trivial actions of the grown characters are enveloped through childhood's eyes with the atmosphere of elaborate melodrama.

The second act scene is basically the same as the scene of the first act, save that now the futuristic chaos of the world as seen through a child's eyes has resolved itself into the world's actual shapes and forms—the bed cannot be seen through the window; the trees are not so tall, nor do pears and cherries any longer grow on the same branch; the great roadway that in the first act seemed to stretch a hundred miles over the fields into the mysterious distance is now seen to be only a rather narrow footpath leading across the back yard to the automobile road about one hundred feet away; the shrubbery that in the first act seemed to be a deep jungle is now only shrubbery. The eyes of youth—the little boy of the first act is in the twenties now; so, also, is the little girl—see that Uncle Jim (who is the same age as in Act I, only the ages of the two central characters, the boy and girl, changing during the play) is not the big and wonderful man he seemed to be. In fact, Uncle Jim is a very little man, without any other ambition or purpose in the world than to be nice to everybody. The President of the United States, whose gross deficiencies the Youth points out to him in a scene in which the Youth rehearses his college debate with the chief executive, is about two and one-half feet tall, a mere pigmy. Diamond Dick? The Youth smiles reminiscently when the name is mentioned—poor old Diamond Dick has been dead these dozen years! His place has been taken by D'Artag-

nan, who in one scene stands at the top of the stairs of the house and with his sword puts to rout the combined heroes of G. A. Henty, Shakespeare, Dickens and Tolstoi, although in the crisis he is saved from the blade of Ibsen's Master Builder only by the timely interference of the elegant Van Bibber, who flabbergasts Solness with a mere look.

That is, D'Artagnan seems to have taken Diamond Dick's place, although, as the act progresses, the Youth grows rather chilly toward the brave Frenchman and one senses that it is a case of *cherchez la femme*. The latter is presently discovered to be none other than Flavia, ruler over the kingdom of Zenda, although Youth, inconstant ever, subsequently makes a rendezvous (a droll scene) now with Hope Langham, her of "Soldiers of Fortune," then with Nora Helmer. The latter, however, try as he will to woo her, to cajole her, rebuffs him, keeps him at a distance. The Celebrated Artist seems to Youth the biggest man in the world, although Youth's eyes are not sure whether, after all, the Great Scholar and the Bank President are not the taller men in the community. The little girl, now in the wild glory of young womanhood, also sees the world with new eyes, though the Youth is still her hero, still her love. But, where the little boy of the first act approached her, albeit timidly, with the stick of candy, the girl now finds that she must make the advances. And the scene (in nature much the same as that at the conclusion of the preceding act) in which the girl, about to leave with her parents for a trip around the world, tries vainly to convey to the young man her heart-longing for him, her wish to have him claim her for wife, with the young man's coattails the while being tugged at by the Bank President, the Great Scholar and the Celebrated Artist with their whisperings "Remember your 'career'—don't tie yourself down—don't let sentiment interfere with your future," brings the curtain down.

The third act scene remains still basically the same, although not so precisely ordered as the view of the world through the eyes of youth—besides, the

real roses on the bushes are made of paper now and the footpath, although it is the same footpath, seems much longer through the eyes of age than it did before, and the bed again stares out from the window—only now the bed is at once a welcome and a frightening sight, at once rest temporary, rest eternal. And everybody in the world seems to be of pretty much the same height—it doesn't matter who they are or what they are. Everybody, that is, but the Celebrated Artist and the Iceman. The young man, now in the late fifties, and himself a celebrated artist after long and patient and health-rending struggle, sees the Celebrated Artist as a little man, the fine, healthy, big-lunged Iceman that he might have been, a giant. For the now crabbed old man, the quondam youth, has lost everything (so he sees it) in his fight for fame—youth, the opportunities to amass a sufficient fortune against the drab and lingering years, the pleasures of life—the girl, his sweetheart, love. As his companion, D'Artagnan's place has long since been taken by another hero, Cyrano de Bergerac. As the act progresses, however, the marked intrinsic and even external similarity of Cyrano to Diamond Dick, the man's boyhood hero, becomes apparent to the audience. Uncle Jim, who seemed so small to the man in youth, now looks to him very much like any other man, although Uncle Jim is still the small man he was when seen through the eyes of youth in the second act. The old man sees the President of the United States to be of greater stature than the Scholar, and of vastly greater stature than the Bank President. Thus is his vision distorted.

Yet he refuses to believe when he is told by the Oculist, the "*compère*" of the play, that he does not see aright: that the Bank President is much bigger than the President of the United States, in fact, that the Bank President provided the heels on the President's shoes to make him appear as big as he seems. The scene wherein the man's golden sweetheart of other and fairer days flashes again into his life and, on her sudden and unexpected entrance, in the midst of a most important piece of work,

causes everything to leave the man's vision, everything and everyone but her, (the entire scene being suddenly darkened and the woman revealed to the man in a purple flush of light), and the subsequent scene wherein the man learns that what confronts him, what has so shocked his thoughts off the rails of work and blotted out the world, is not the woman herself, but the memory of her, the ever-beating, ever-pounding memory of her crying out to him across the pallid and disappointing years to his empty throne of fame, have a quasi-Hoffmanns-thal quality. (A delicate touch has been imparted to this scene by the author through the device of phrasing the love passages spoken here by the characters in the same terms as the love scene in Act II, thereby suggesting the despotism of rosemary, the tyranny of memories.) When the darkness is finally dissipated, the audience observes the scene as it was at the beginning of the act. Where the man was standing, however, the audience now beholds the little boy of Act I. And, as the little boy—for such was the old man, after all—as the little boy, in whose breast beats the heart of the old man's experience, stands there, the scene gradually changes back in every detail, save that the bed staring from the window seems no longer so filled with dread, to the disordered scene of the first act.

Obviously, it is out of the question for me in this small space to review this play for you at the length it properly demands; to quote its many witty lines such, for example, as the youth's "We men flatter ourselves when we believe a woman does not love us: why otherwise would she waste her time on us?", as the artist's "Long, long ago, in the beginning of things, the first French farce writer dramatized the month of February and the world came to write the result on the calendar as May," as the scholar's "Persons object to the presentation of vice in attractive form. In what other form, pray, can it be presented?" So, too, is space not given me wherein to thread the play's love story for you; wherein to tell you of the ingenious scheme of the musical accompaniment

to the play, with its first act childhood's immature and undeveloped *motif* conveyed by an ill-assorted orchestra that lacks the love notes of viola and violin and cello, that runs to heavy brass and piccolo and rattling drums—with its second act youth's throbbing *motif* of adventure and dreams and passions conveyed by an orchestra now amplified to the full with oboe and viola, B flat clarinet and cello, alto-saxophone and French horn—with its last act dimming *motif* of dimming age conveyed by the orchestra now again deleted of its instruments of passion, with its violins become faint and squeaky and with its ominous beatings of funereal kettle-drums.

Nor is space left in which to describe for you the trick of the increased vividness of the scenic pictures of each successive act, as they are seen first rather indistinctly through the eyes of childhood, then more vividly through the eyes of youth, then more vividly still, albeit not so genuinely as through youth's eyes, through the spectacles of age's weakened vision. Thus, the house in the first act set back at R₃, is brought in the second act down to R₂ and in the third act to the very footlights at R₁, conveying the sense to the audience, in the last case, that it is being assisted nearer to the vision by old age's eyeglasses.

The critics are divided in their opinions of the dramatic and artistic worth of the play, some contending that the little girl in Act I should have worn a pink bow in her hair in place of the baby blue bow, others arguing that the bow should have been cream color. Still others contend that while the idea of the play is an excellent one and the treatment and evolution thereof original, genuinely skillful and amusing, the play as a play is ruined because one of the minor women characters in the second act wears a freakish and unbecoming gown. On the other hand, two of the critics approve of the play heartily on the ground that its lighting effects are awfully pretty.

But enough. I have done my duty—at least, in part. It now only remains

for me to become again the conventional critic and to shirk my work by reviewing the plays actually presented during the last few weeks. Therefore, will "CHILDREN OF TODAY," by Miss Clara Lipman and Mr. Samuel Shipman, kindly step forward! We observe here a dramatization of Oscar Wilde's celebrated epigrammatic duet: "Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them, sometimes they forgive them" and "Few parents nowadays pay any respect to what their children say to them: the old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out," the dramatization being completely successful in ruining two perfectly good epigrams. To a not inconsiderable degree, it would appear to be the belief of an ample quota of our native showwrights that wherever there are bad manners there is drama. This probably accounts for the fact that our American society class is so often chosen by our playwrights as dramatic material. It certainly accounts in a measure for the fact that our native plays are so often unsuccessful in London. It also probably accounts for the fact that almost every American thinks he has sufficient material out of his own life and actions to make a play. To a not inconsiderable degree, it would similarly appear to be the belief of a number of our showwrights that satire means simply the reversing of the conventional, that anyone may be a satirist merely by throwing the bat toward the ball instead of throwing the ball toward the bat. The authors of the piece under discussion are evidently profound swamis of both these cults. The result is the usual result when George Bernard Shaw falls into the hands of persons who imagine that all that is required to be another Shaw is the ability to select some particularly old-fashioned play and masquerade it as a new and exceedingly up-to-date play by making the son or daughter the hero or heroine in place of the father or mother. This, believe the hapless persons, causes the play to be "up-to-the-minute," "satirical" and "somewhat revolutionary." What it generally causes, however, is nothing more than the spoiling of the old-fash-

ioned play. The formula for a "Shavian" play, as it would seem to exist in the curious local showwright mind, is not difficult of deciphering. All one has to do is to take a play like, say, Mr. A. E. Thomas's "The Rainbow" and put the father's speeches in the daughter's mouth, and vice versa—that is, have Miss Chatterton speak Mr. Henry Miller's lines and Mr. Miller Miss Chatterton's. Or, say, a play like "Mrs. Dane's Defense" and place most of Mrs. Dane's sentiments in Sir Daniel Carteret's mouth and most of Sir Daniel's in Mrs. Dane's. Here would be a brief scene from such a so-regarded "Shavian" version of the Henry Arthur Jones play:

MRS. D.—Then you never saw your cousin Felicia after childhood?

SIR D.—No — I — I — (*Suddenly breaks down.*) I can't bear it! I can't bear it!

MRS. D.—What?

SIR D.—Your questioning me as if I were a loose man. I feel you suspect me still! . . .

MRS. D.—Come, my dear Sir Daniel, this won't do. (*Takes him gently by the hand.*) We are here to get the truth, aren't we?

SIR D.—Go on, I'll tell you everything. But I don't know what you'll think of me. I don't care! I'd almost rather everybody believed me guilty of being dissolute than suffer what I have the last few weeks!

MRS. D.—(*after a pause*)—You're lying!

SIR D.—(*flashing out on her*)—How dare you? How dare you? (*Stands confronting her.*)

MRS. D.—(*looking straight at him*)—I say you're lying! (*She looks at him steadily. His eyes drop. He sinks on his knees before her, seizes her hand in supplication, looks at her appealingly.*)

SIR D.—I was only a child . . . I believed her . . . etc., etc.

Were "CHILDREN OF TODAY" merely a bad play, I should deal with it here at no such length. But it is more than a mere bad play: it is representative of all that vulgarity and untutored atmosphere of viewpoint which operate so militantly against the American stage. Therein lies its significance and its warning.

"RACHEL," a so-called "romantic drama" by Carina Jordan, founded on

alleged episodes in the career of the illustrious Mademoiselle Elisa Felix, is another of those plays containing a Moe Rees. Whenever an invitation is extended me to examine a drama laid in France about one hundred years ago and I detect the presence of a Moe Rees on the programme, I immediately prepare myself for the worst. Moe Rees: the drama: : young Travers: the novel. Moe Rees: the drama: : Mandy: the coon song. Being a dutiful critic, however, I always remain in my chair until quarter after ten, at which time the heroine is by rule due to baffle the exploring villain by secreting Moe in the closet. This dramatic *coup* negotiated, I feel sufficiently secure in my knowledge of what invariably transpires after that to go home and enjoy myself by not reading what happens to be the most talked-of book of the day. After Moe has been hidden in the closet, I am perfectly sure that the villain, who is always very passionate, will seek to barter with the heroine for her person in exchange for Moe's freedom, will be rebuffed with hauteur and will thereupon begin chasing the heroine around the room. And I am always similarly sure that later on, when Moe staggers out of his hiding place, the heroine will assist him in getting away by "outwitting" his pursuers. These pursuers are always "outwitted" in one of three specific ways: (A)—through being directed by the heroine to search for Moe in the room at R₂ so that Moe meanwhile may make his getaway through the room at L₂; (B)—through being diverted by a fiery patriotic harangue on the part of the heroine; or (C)—through the heroine pretending to make ardent love to the leader of the mob and thus beguiling the latter into temporary inaction until Moe sneaks around the back of the sofa and out of the open door. I have generally found these "romantic dramas" to translate romance in terms of costumes and drama in terms of shouted words. "RACHEL" is indeed an old, old fabric. Madame Bertha Kalich essays the title role. But would it not seem to take a great actress to play a great actress? May a stunning talent be represented save by a stunning

talent? Here a subject for the newspaper interviewers. Of course, Miss Elsie Janis's imitation of the talented Bernhardt is a rare and logic-smashing performance; of course, no actor, however otherwise incompetent, has ever succeeded in failing wholly in the role of that actor of actors, Napoleon Bonaparte—but may not the question be still an open one? The argument against me will be that in such a play as "RACHEL," Madame Kalich is called upon to depict, not Rachel *acting*, but Rachel off the stage, in private life. But the argument in turn against this argument would be the patent one that all great actresses have exhibited and do exhibit a more intricate acting off the stage than upon it.

Mr. William Hurlbut describes the heroine of his latest play, "THE STRANGE WOMAN," as "the last word of the Continental woman of intellect." Previous to the unveiling of the play in New York, the producers caused this designation of its central figure to be disseminated in the public prints and thereby piqued our interest and curiosity to the point where we awaited with natural impatience the lifting of the curtain. What, mused we, might be the form of this heroine's ponderous intellect? And, laying to the problem, we came to the conclusion that the Last Word would undoubtedly dish out for us a number of mental feats which, if not ultra-scandalous in their novelty, would at least be hot from the oven. The very least, thought we, that the Last Word could do for us would be to indicate a belief that the masterly contrapuntal weavings of Johannes Brahms were best to be presented to the senses not through the musical but through the prismatic color scale, that Molnar was the superior metaphysician to Strindberg or that a handling of the present French artillery forces as if they were light infantry would cause those forces speedily to be the most powerful in the European armament. Then up climbed the curtain—and the Last Word came down to the footlights and admitted timidly that she believed in free love! Timidly, because upon her belief being subsequently phrased by another, she ob-

jected vigorously to the verbalization on the ground that it sounded "coarse," although Antoine Saint-Just pioneered it so originally as far back as 1789. Also mindful of the circumstance that she was the "star" of a play intended for American consumption, the Last Word, moreover, although she claimed to believe in free love, insisted upon remaining supernaturally chaste and hence, "sympathetic." In view of these injections of moral eau de cologne and intellectual ether into the theme of the play, my nose is prejudiced in its contemplation. I am in the habit of judging the circus parade from the standpoint of the band wagon that is its vancourier. Still, whatever the mediocrities, paralogisms and sophomoric airs of the play, it yet remains the most gracefully written of the Hurlbut efforts to date and, as its sidereal exhibit Miss Elsie Ferguson is discovered to be a performer of cultivated speech, deportmental urbanity and general charm. This line from the dialogue is so engaging that it calls for quotation: "When a man encounters a woman in a mood he doesn't understand, he wants to know if she is tired." I refrain, on the other hand, from quoting lines having to do with Saturday night being bath night and with Peruna.

I had always supposed that a farce was intended as a theatrical entertainment designed primarily for purposes of laughter. It now appears from the writings of my critical colleagues that a farce is nothing of the kind. According to the essays which they have delivered on the subject of the farce by Messrs. Goddard and Dickey called "THE MISLEADING LADY," a farce is evidently a theatrical presentation designed primarily to instruct the public in the technique of playwrighting. Thus, I have come to learn that "THE MISLEADING LADY" cannot be a good farce because "it fractures several dramaturgic rules" and, again, that it cannot possibly be a good farce because "its construction has not been accomplished with a strict adherence to the imperative legislations of the dramatic craft." I'm so sorry. I feel so ashamed of myself. "THE MISLEADING LADY," you see, didn't know I was a

dramatic critic and made me laugh as I have not laughed at even one of our serious native thesis dramas in some time. The Goddard-Dickey farce may be an abattoir of all the dramatic rules and regulations, but it contains a capital story—a clever modernization of "The Taming of the Shrew"—a series of ingenious surprises, and what is to me the funniest character written into the native farce records, a mentally tainted fellow who imagines himself to be Napoleon, who is constantly calling his aides into secret conference as to ways and means to circumvent the approaching Wellington, who bestows the rank of field marshal in return for favors shown him, and who is eventually recaptured by the asylum guards through being enticed from his hiding place by the latter's trick of bawling out the "Marseillaise." This character, among other things, is a superb satire on that vast concourse of supposedly saner individuals who are fond of imagining that they, too, possess many of the qualities of the famous soldier of France. An artistically conceived character this, a character that, after inspiring an evening of wholesome protoxide of nitrogen, is made successfully to reduce the guffaws, in the end, to a very genuine tear.

Welcome, Mr. Cyril Maude! A gentleman who appreciates, in contradistinction to the rank and file of our native mummers, that acting may not alone be learned through an assiduous study of the *Morning Telegraph*. A gentleman who appreciates that acting may be made to resolve itself into something approaching, however remotely, to an art, that it may not be merely a talent for wearing pretty clothes, for eliminating views from interviews, for tea-ing ostentatiously at the Hotel Knickerbocker. One who realizes that the ability to mispronounce the English language and the ability at all times to conceal as much as possible of the playwright's meaning are not the sole elements necessary to histrionic talent. An actor who, like most of his brother British actors, looks on his profession seriously, and not, as do so many of our home school, merely as an excuse for not working.

ANYTHING BUT NOVELS!

By H. L. Mencken

A WELCOME hiatus, by the gods! A pleasing surcease! A suave, caressing interregnum! I reviewed thirty-two novels in this place last month, and not one of them was a first-rater, nor even a good specimen of second-rater. Imagine reading them, reading *at* them, struggling through their thousands of tedious pages in the service of Truth and Beauty, those twin vestals—imagine such a job for a man grown girthy and sclerotic, a sitter in easy chairs, a post-prandial napper! Believe me, it left me all tattered and torn, and so I make no apologies for the suety, unappetizing quality of the ensuing article—an article with far too much of human suffering in it to have any room for joy. But, as I have said, now comes relief. The geyser of prose fiction slackens, grows feeble, is turned off. The great majority of novelists slink back to their dens to labor upon their spring offerings. And the few that remain in view turn aside from their major vice to cultivate minor ones.

For example, Theodore Dreiser, who makes his non-fictional début with "A TRAVELER AT FORTY" (*Century Co.*), a chronicle of observations in Darkest Europe. For example, Arnold Bennett, who lifts the alert eyebrow with "PARIS NIGHTS" (*Doran*). For example, H. G. Wells, who describes some very ingenious monkey-shines in "LITTLE WARS" (*Small-Maynard*), a book of games for the middle-aged. Three novelists in large practice, three specialists in the novel—and yet not one with a novel in his hands!

Dreiser's volume is an astounding mixture of the commonplace and the unprecedented. On the one hand he

fills a long and gloomy chapter with the story of the Borgias, apparently under the impression that it is news, and on the other hand he enters into highly intimate and diverting discussions of the persons he encountered in his wanderings, not sparing either the virtuous or the aged. The children of his English host at Bridgely Level strike him as fantastic little creatures, even as a bit uncanny—and he duly sets it down. He meets an Englishman on a French train who pleases him much, and the two become good friends and see Rome together, but the fellow's wife is "obstreperous" and "haughty in her manner" and "so loud-spoken in her opinions" that she is "really offensive"—and down it goes. He makes a mash on a Mlle. Marcelle in Paris, and she accompanies him from Monte Carlo to Ventimiglia, and there gives him a parting kiss and whispers, "*Avril—Fontainebleau*"—and lo, this sweet one is duly spread upon the minutes. He permits himself to be arrested by a fair privateer in Piccadilly, and goes with her to one of the dens of sin that suffragettes see in their nightmares, and cross-examines her at great length regarding her ancestry, her professional ethics and ideals, and her earnings at her dismal craft—and into the book goes a full report of the proceedings. He is entertained by an eminent Dutch jurist in Amsterdam—and upon the pages of the chronicle it appears that the gentleman is "waxy" and "a little pedantic," and that he is probably the sort of "thin, delicate, well barbered" professor that Ibsen had in mind when he cast about for a husband for the daughter of General Gabler.

In brief, a boyish and innocent frankness runs from end to end of the book—that curious *naïveté* which is half the charm of “Sister Carrie” and “Jennie Gerhardt.” Dreiser had never crossed the Atlantic when he set out upon this pilgrimage: he had forty long and hard-lived years behind him before he saw his first cathedral and took his first sniff of Paris air and got his first glimpse of the Italian sun. One might reasonably look for a certain immovable calm, even for a downright emotional anesthesia, in so mature a traveler; but there is no trace of it in the record. He reacted wholly youthfully to the stimuli of a new world, and out of that fact, perhaps, arose the obviousness which gives so quaint a flavor to parts of his story. That English houses are chilly, that the Thames at London is “utterly delightful,” that the gaming tables at Monte Carlo are piled high with glittering coin, that the Italian hill towns are lovely at sunset, that Paris guides are a fraudulent and verminous lot—one scarcely looks for such immemorial facts in a book otherwise the very antithesis of hackneyed. But, after all, such empty impressions of the touring novice do not obtrude: outnumbering and outweighing them are the pregnant observations of an old hand at looking, the sharp remarks and annotations of the creator of Hurstwood, Cowperwood and Père Gerhardt. Here the book rises completely out of the commonplace, and becomes something new, illuminating and heretical. It differs enormously from the customary travel books: it is not a mere description of places and people, but a revelation of their impingement upon an exceptional and almost eccentric personality. Whoever has got civilized pleasure out of the Dreiser novels will read it with joy. It is, in a sense, a free commentary upon those novels, a sort of epilogue in mufti. It makes a bit clearer the Dreiser philosophy, the Dreiser view of life.

That philosophy, incidentally, has a curious likeness to the creed set forth by Joseph Conrad in “A Personal Record.” In brief, it is a magnificent agnosticism, a refusal to take the world too seriously. “For myself,” says Dreiser, “I do not

know what truth is, what beauty is, what love is, what hope is. I do not believe anyone absolutely and I do not doubt anyone absolutely. I think people are both evil and well-intentioned.” From such a standpoint, of course, life appears as utterly meaningless—which is probably what it actually is. The theologians have been trying to read a meaning into it for unnumbered centuries, but all of its most salient phenomena still defy their ticketing. What is the lesson to be drawn from the downfall and break-up of Lord Jim? Conrad not only fails to draw a lesson: he specifically denies that it is to be drawn. And so with Carrie Meeber. Her career is a joke upon all the copybook maxims. Her very guilt, so-called, is a pathetic form of innocence. She is as helpless and as blameless as a sparrow in a gale, a twig in the Gulf Stream. To read any divine plan into her life is simply to argue that divinity is unintelligent. And yet who will deny her reality? Who will deny that she is genuinely a human being? Who will hold that Dreiser misunderstood her?

Bennett's book differs vastly and for the better from his “Your United States,” a piece of trade goods that he had better left unwritten. The first half-dozen chapters give us delightful pictures of life in Paris, and, as in Dreiser's book, there is a total absence of polite reticences. One feels that the French family depicted in “Bourgeois,” for example, is made up of actual persons, and what is more, that they are typical of the best that France has to offer. Bennett lived in Paris and thereabout long enough to get into the homes of such folk, an enterprise obviously impossible to the casual visitor, or even to the persistent besieger of ambassadorial and faubourg society. When he describes that groaning dinner table, with old Marthe passing the soup, and old Tante commanding her, and the good Doctor beaming upon his guest, and the Duprés on the walls, one feels that it is a table under which he has actually stretched his legs. And there is the same note of authenticity, the same complete and genial familiarity, in the

English portions of the book—the sketches of the Five Towns, the history of the Smith family, the extraordinarily fine chapters on London. Even Italy, Switzerland and the Riviera are drawn with this sure stroke. But Bennett saw the United States too briefly, and in the worst possible fashion. He was gaped at too much himself to do any profitable seeing. The result is that his American book bears no sort of relation to this brilliant and fascinating "PARIS NIGHTS."

The Wells book, despite the show of tin soldiers on the cover, is anything but a guide to nursery sport for sucklings. The "little wars" it describes, indeed, are so inordinately complex and scientific that even the adult will need a considerable military experience to understand their finer points. But the way to simplify them is clearly indicated, and, once simplified, they should be a good deal more interesting than card games, tenpins, or billiards as she is commonly played. They make their demands, not upon manual dexterity, nor even upon the talent for dissembling, but upon foresight and shrewd calculation. Once the ground for a battle has been chosen—and it may be either a backyard or an ordinary room—and the tin soldiers and toy guns have been properly arrayed, all the subsequent moves have a likeness to real war. Guns may be captured, beaten back or put out of action; cavalry may be unhorsed or surrounded; infantry may be mowed down or forced to retreat. I can well imagine two fat old fellows playing this boylike but far from boyish game on a rainy Sunday afternoon—and forgetting their lumbagos, their wives and their bills payable. What if Mr. Wells should be the herald of a renaissance of toys for men? Women never get over the taste for such things: the great majority of them make dolls of their babies, and even of their husbands. Why should men pass out of their non-age so completely? George Nathan and I, meeting occasionally in taverns to discuss the pretty arts, end by challenging each other to bouts at piano playing, yodling and *sauerbraten* eating. Why shouldn't we also meet at marbles, at

hop scotch, at blowing soap bubbles, at top spinning, at kite flying, at tying tin cans to the tails of dogs?

Did I promise you a surcease of novels? Well, here is an exception, and only one, though it comes double-bareled. It is a vague, windy tale by August Strindberg, called "ON THE SEA-BOARD" in the translation of Elizabeth C. Westergren (*Stewart-Kidd*), and "BY THE OPEN SEA" in that of Ellie Schleussner (*Huebsch*). The two versions reached me, by one of the incredible coincidences of life, on the same day. I prefer that of Mr. (or is it Miss, or Mrs., or Herr, or Frau, or Fraülein, or Fru, or M., or Mme., or Gospodin, or the Hon., or Dr., or Prof.?) Schleussner, though, truth to tell, there is little difference between them. The tale concerns one Axel Borg, a very Strindbergian (*i.e.*, moony and quackish) young Swede. He is an ichthyologist by profession, and he goes out to the East Skerries, in the Baltic, to teach the natives how to catch the *strömming*, a succulent clupeoid of those parts. This Axel has a very low opinion of women. He regards them as vicious and inferior creatures—"the intermediary form between man and child"—and is full of a Nietzschean determination to make them eat out of his hand. But the moment a fair visitor, *et.* thirty-three, appears on his island, he succumbs to her charms. Not, of course, without a struggle. He mocks her, lords it over her, pictures her in toothless old age, even takes drugs to dull the thought of her. But inch by inch she conquers him—and then she gets her revenge by boldly playing the wanton with a young assistant, and directly under his nose! Poor fellow! What is this low comedy Superman to do? He adopts a double course. First he pays off the young assistant in his own coin, and then he gets into a rowboat and rows straight out to sea. When the curtain falls he is still rowing. Row on, thou worst of Strindbergian numskulls! Row on, Axel, old top! And beware of the Fool Killer in a motorboat!

Nietzscheism without the Strindbergian ginger pop will be found in two

volumes just published by Dr. Oscar Levy, the distinguished editor of the English Nietzsche and an ardent propagandist of the terrible Friedrich's ideas. One is a fine translation of "THE RENAISSANCE" of Arthur, Count Gobineau, by Paul V. Cohn (*Putnam*), and the other is an English version of Heinrich Heine's "ATTA TROLL," by Herman Scheffauer (*Sidgwick-Jackson*). To each Dr. Levy contributes a critical preface, and in each case I have found the preface even more interesting than the work following. The Heine poem, despite its bouncing humor, is but little known to English speaking admirers of the poet's lyrics, and so far as I know, indeed, Mr. Scheffauer's excellent translation is the first ever published. The piece is a burlesque epic in miniature, and on the surface it seems to be no more than a comic fable about a trained bear which escapes from a circus and takes refuge in the Pyrenees, and is there tracked down and shot by one Lascaro, son to the old witch Uraka—a comic fable full of unintelligible reference to mid-century German politics and forgotten esthetic duels. But, as Dr. Levy shows so clearly, it is really far more than this—to wit, a devastating satire upon both the aroused and loutish democracy of Europe and the doddering feudalism. Atta Troll, the dancing bear, is the former, and Lascaro and his mother represent the latter. So understood, the poem resolves itself into a pre-Nietzschean travesty in the best Nietzschean manner, a riotous attack upon all the pet ideals of the Philistine, a clown show recalling some of the later chapters of "Also Sprach Zarathustra." No wonder Heine is not to be mentioned in the presence of the German Emperor: there is not a royal platitude that he does not demolish with a bludgeon. And Mr. Scheffauer has put no damper upon his extravagant humor in the process of Englishing: the translation is a racy and amusing piece of verse.

The Gobineau book is made up of five long dramas upon Renaissance themes—not connected plays for the theater, but merely groups of vivid scenes. All the great actors of that superb epoch move

through them—the Borgias, Michael Angelo, Machiavelli, Savonarola, Raphael, Charles V, Charles VIII and a host of others. I know of no work which makes the Renaissance more brilliantly real, whether in its glory or in its hogishness, nor any which better reveals the essential spirit of the time. Here was human progress, indeed—a magnificent leap from barbarian darkness to the most gorgeous civilization the world has ever known. No wonder it fascinated Gobineau, with his lifelong interest in the larger interplay of human forces. He was a figure out of more spacious days himself—a descendant of Bourbon aristocrats, a believer in race and breeding, the natural antithesis of his early friend and benefactor, the mob revering De Tocqueville. De Tocqueville had faith in the melting pot; Gobineau believed only in the uncorrupted Aryan. As Dr. Levy shows, many of his ideas have been borrowed by Wagner's son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and watered for German consumption in the borrowing. Chamberlain thought it necessary, after his "Foundations of the Nineteenth Century" had lifted the Germans to an ecstasy of self-admiration, to deny that he owed anything to Gobineau. The denial has not survived examination, but it remains clear nevertheless that there is a wide difference between Gobineau's Aryan and Chamberlain's half-imaginary Teuton. And there is an abyss between Chamberlain's petty piety and Gobineau's sturdy paganism, and another no less deep between Gobineau's picture of the *Sémite-blanc primitif* corrupted and handing on corruption and Chamberlain's "patriotic" anti-Semitism. Dr. Levy's preface, which runs to the length of a pamphlet, goes into all these differences very carefully, and is an admirable exposition of Gobineau's true ideas, as opposed to the sonorous stuff that German vanity has read into them. This Gobineau is one worth better acquaintance. Like Max Stirner, he sent out ripples that are still widening.

Brieux, Hervieu and Arnold Bennett are the playwrights of the month. Two of the Brieux plays appear in a single

volume, intelligently translated by Frederick Eismann. They are "BLANCHETTE" and "THE ESCAPE" (*Luce*), the first a solemn *reductio ad absurdum* of free education, and the latter a devastating attack upon the eugenics buncombe. "BLANCHETTE," which goes back to 1892, is the play that got Brieux his first hearing in Paris, and "THE ESCAPE" (*L'Evasion*), which followed four years later, was crowned by the Academy and paved the way for the author's subsequent election to that sacrosanct body. Both plays, as their popular success indicates, are somewhat conventional in structure, and both would probably seem old-fashioned to an audience today. But all the same, both of them are full of those qualities which we have come to associate with the work of the author of "Damaged Goods." They tilt furiously at everyday shams; they are often more expository than dramatic; they show a diligent effort to get away from the worst tricks of the theater. Brieux's faults are also in them: his failing for overstating his case, his subordination of character to thesis, his oppressive Philistinism. But for a discussion of all these matters I refer you to the preface to the volume. I wrote it myself and am thus able to recommend it unreservedly. In the main, it is a very judicious estimate of Brieux's abilities, which have been vastly overestimated of late by the clerical press agents of "Damaged Goods." But in it the true cognoscenti will discern a staggering bull, a thumping misstatement of fact, a ghastly slip of the pen. I leave you to discover that slip for yourself. To the first reader who finds it I promise a genuine five-cent cigar. Thus I cunningly promote the sale of the book, and at the same time diminish by one unit (as the serum-therapists have it) a Christmas present that is slowly eating into my vitals.

The Hervieu play is "THE LABYRINTH" (*Huebsch*), a translation of "Le Dedale," by Barrett H. Clark and Lander MacClintock. It had its first performance at the Théâtre Français on December 19, 1903, with Le Bargy in the principal role, and two years later

an English version by Dr. W. L. Courtney was presented at the Herald Square Theater by Olga Nethersole, that high priestess of passion. The piece revolves around the connubial misadventures of M. et Mme. De Porgy, a young French couple of wealth and position. M. De Porgy is given to the more extreme forms of gaiety, and after forgiving him many times Mme. De Porgy finally divorces him, and marries M. Guillaume Le Breuil, an honest fellow. The child of the first marriage, little Louis, bounces between its sundered parents—six months with papa and six months with mamma. One day, while in mamma's custody, little Louis falls seriously ill, and papa is summoned to the bedside. You begin to guess what happens! Well, well, it really happens—and there is the deuce to pay. What to do? It would be wrong to kill Le Breuil and let De Porgy live; it would be banal to kill De Porgy and let Le Breuil live; and it would be senseless to kill Mme. De Porgy-Le Breuil and let both husbands live. So Hervieu compromises by killing the husbands. That is to say, he has them meet at fisticuffs and roll over a precipice together. A melodramatic ending to a play that is otherwise a very respectable piece of work. In most of his other pieces Hervieu has avoided such obvious devices. Let us hope that the present translators will give us English versions of those other pieces—particularly the satirical "Connais-toi," which Arnold Daly once did as "Know Thyself," and the ironical "Le Réveil," and the Brieux-like "La Loi de l'Homme" and "Les Ténailles," and the wholly Hervieu-like "L'Enigme" and "La Course du Flambeau." Anatole France once called Hervieu "the greatest author of our time"—overpraise, true enough, but still proof that the man is worth hearing.

The Bennett play is "THE GREAT ADVENTURE" (*Doran*), a dramatization of "Buried Alive," and inasmuch as the sagacious Nathan will probably see it on the stage before these presents reach you, I pass over its pretty humors without anatomizing them. Other current dramatic books are "THE FALL

OF UG," by Rufus Steele (*Howell*); "THE INFLUENCE OF THE DRAMA," by Granville Forbes Sturgis (*Shakespeare Press*); "THE FACTS ABOUT SHAKESPEARE," by William A. Neilson and Ashley H. Thorndike (*Macmillan*); "FIFTEEN YEARS OF A DANCER'S LIFE," by Loie Fuller (*Small-Maynard*), and "THE RUSSIAN BALLET," by A. E. Johnson (*Houghton-Mifflin*).

"THE FALL OF UG" is the masque presented last August by the Bohemian Club of San Francisco in the open air theater among the giant redwoods. It shows passable blank verse and some fair lyrics, but that is all I can say of it. As for Mr. Sturgis's critical work, it oscillates between the obvious and the ridiculous. In one place he speaks of "the very highest type of drama, from Shakespeare to the latest output of Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett"! In another place, he sets it down gravely that "more theaters have been burned when 'The Two Orphans' was being presented than have burned during the presentation of other plays." You will turn with relief to the intelligent, if somewhat ponderous scholarship of "THE FACTS ABOUT SHAKESPEARE," a truly comprehensive review of all that is known about the Bard and his plays. The volume brings to completion the admirable Tudor Shakespeare and is by the general editors of that work.

La Loie's book is an entertaining account of her struggle up from slavery—mostly true, as Huckleberry Finn would say, but probably with a few stretchers here and there. Success came to her, it appears, only after great suffering. The managers had little faith in her theory that the electric light could supplant old-fashioned foot and leg work, and rival artistes played many sad tricks upon her. But bit by bit she conquered, and in the end came her great triumph in Paris. Thereafter it was easy sailing: she became the friend of princesses, geniuses and millionaires, and progressed through Europe in almost regal splendor. In Chapter XXI she ascends to the heights of prose fiction, telling how she once kidnapped a French reporter, brought him to the United States,

lodged him in a Brooklyn hotel, and then watched the menials torture him. "All the attendants," it appears, "are negroes in American hotels." The bellboy who served this poor Gaul was a "huge" one of savage habits. He stole the visitor's boots, rifled his pantaloons, and then "backed up against the wall and unconcernedly whistled a cake walk." Marvelous doings! "THE RUSSIAN BALLET" sticks closer to dancing. It is a sumptuous folio volume, magnificently illustrated in colors by René Bull and bound in white buckram, with gilt stamping. Mr. Johnson discusses the origin of the new Russian dancing in his introduction, and then proceeds to tell the stories of the principal ballets—"Le Lac des Cygnes," "Scheherezade," "Cléopâtre," "Les Sylphides" and so on. At the end there is a brief chapter upon Anna Pavlova.

Following Dreiser and Bennett come various other adventurers, male and female, each with a tale of wandering and derring-do. Perhaps the most amusing of them is Oliver Madox Hueffer, a brother to Joseph Conrad's collaborator, who calls his book "A VAGABOND IN NEW YORK" (*Lane*). Hueffer, like John Masefield, tried bartending in a lower West Side barrel house, but he quickly gave it up for the post of chicken embalmer in a delicatessen store, and from that he graduated into supering for moving pictures, and thereafter, in quick succession, he became a Brahmin guru at Coney Island, mahout with a one-ring circus, lecturer on a rubberneck wagon, and roustabout on a Long Island steamboat. Most of the time, however, he seems to have been without any profession at all, and so he made acquaintance with the benches of City Hall Park and with the decayed English baronets who infest them. On the whole, he found the accommodations satisfactory. The one serious objection to the benches is that they do not fit the small of the back. Those on the London Embankment are far better in that respect, but they have the alternative defect of being too sloping. As for the benches of Paris, they are so uncomfortable that refreshing sleep is almost impossible.

Where, alas, is perfection in this botched old world? Hueffer's observations upon New York and the New Yorkers are generally accurate and amusing, but now and then he makes a strange error. For example, when he says that the "native-born New Yorker" always pronounces "th" as "d." He even gives a specimen: "Dree dousand Despian dieves" for "Three thousand Thespian thieves"—and ascribes the mangling to German influence! The eyes of this young Englishman, I fear, are sharper than his ears. And even his ears outdo his etymology, for he derives the word "boob" from the German word *bub* (boy), forgetting entirely the good old English word "booby." He has been to sea: has he never heard of the booby hatch?

Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's "AMERICA AS I SAW IT" (*Macmillan*) is an ill-written and chaotic mixture of platitudes and puerilities—in brief, the sort of stuff that fills the "home" pages of our afternoon newspapers. I quote a few of the fair traveler's gems of ratiocination:

Money lightly earned is often lightly spent.

Sex is the greatest force in life, for life itself is dependent on it.

Lectures properly and conscientiously prepared yield useful information.

The art of listening graciously is a gift.

All women cannot be workers any more than all men can be soldiers.

To be well dressed is to be suitably dressed.

America is a land of surprises.

And so on, and so on, for nearly five hundred pages! Not, of course, that the whole book is made up of such high school philosophy: there are also passages of description, and some of them are full of the charm of the marvelous. It is common, it appears, for American judges to invite the litigants before them to remove their coats, and even to sit in their shirtsleeves themselves (Page 44). Again, the custom prevails among us of using the Star-Spangled Banner as a pocket handkerchief (Page 22). Yet again, the American home is without doors (save, perhaps, the front door), and "if Tom proposes to Mary every member of the family and every domestic in the place can hear their sweet nothings" (Page 20). Finally, our stage is wholly unharassed by a censorship

(Page 256). (Shades of Comstock! What stage in all the world is worse beset by snouters and smuthounds?) For the rest, Mrs. Alec-Tweedie (can this be a real name?) devotes herself largely to giving lists of the magnificoes who entertained her while she was studying our civilization. Among them I note Col. Roosevelt, Mrs. Taft, the late J. Pierpont Morgan, Dr. Andrew Carnegie, Thomas A. Edison, Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont and Miss Jane Addams. Obviously she had a pleasant visit, for the tone of her book is very friendly. But nevertheless it remains a superficial and preposterous piece of reporting.

Another chronicler who seems to be a favorite of the great is Frederick Townsend Martin, whose "THINGS I REMEMBER" (*Lane*) introduces us to many persons of title, including even an emperor or two. Lying ill at Beyrout of chills and fever, Mr. Martin was visited by the late Dom Pedro of Brazil, who stood by his bedside and urged him to take heart. Obeying the royal command, he lived to attend the funeral of Lord Lovat, to be photographed with Lord Leigh (facing page 236), and to appear as "a gentleman of the period" at the famous Bradley Martin ball, Bradley being his brother. In late years, it seems, Mr. Martin has devoted his money and talents to various philanthropies. For one thing, he has tried to induce Congress to build American embassies in all the capitals of Europe. For another thing, he has made encouraging speeches to the residents of the London East End. For a third thing, he has "let a certain selfish section of society know that the wealth which they inherited could open the gates of untold pleasure to others," thus "unhesitatingly" becoming, as he says himself, a traitor to his own class. Many anecdotes of a highly amusing and even instructive character are scattered through Mr. Martin's book. Persons of the highest consideration have bombarded him with their choicest epigrams, and he himself has often come back with hot ones. On page 205, for example, he records a brief but thrilling wit combat

that he once had with Mrs. Hamilton Fish.

"Don't you get bored dining out night after night?" asked Mrs. Fish archly. "What's the use of it?"

"Well," replied Mr. Martin, with devastating promptness, "the use of it is that we can get fresh thoughts from one another."

But Mrs. Fish was not to be floored by this sally. Quick as a flash she replied:

"Perhaps. But, Fred Martin, I'll just tell you right away that I didn't come here to listen to one of your sermons."

Whereupon, I suppose (though he here closes Chapter IX abruptly, and doesn't say so), the hon. gent. went down for the count of ten, and had to be revived by the scandalized butler.

From such empty nonsense it is refreshing to turn to the penetrating observations of Anne Warwick in "THE MECCAS OF THE WORLD" (Lane), a series of sketches of New York, London, Paris, Madrid and Vienna. I know of no recent vivisectionist who has more deftly explored the American character, and so far as I can judge, she is equally skillful and accurate with the French, the English, the Austrian and the Spanish. Moreover, this "Miss Warwick" knows how to write as well as how to observe. Her picture of Vienna in carnival week is a vivid and charming piece of description, and she does equally well with the shoddy splendors of the Spanish capital, and with the mysteries of fashion in Paris. But why does she pile domino upon *nom de plume* by posing as a man in her Vienna chapters, and as an Englishman at the end (Page 258)? Unless my spies lie shamelessly, she is actually a very attractive female of the genus *Homo Americanus*—the daughter, in fact, of an American bishop. But perhaps the sheer extent of her travels has made her forget her nationality: she has been on the go since childhood, and seems to know all countries and all tongues. I drop the problem, and, in parting, recommend the book. It is an extremely interesting volume and it shows an honest effort to tell the truth.

Various publishers seek to destroy my peace of mind by sending me solemn tomes upon economic and sociological subjects—for example, "FINANCING THE WAGE EARNER'S FAMILY," by Prof. Dr. Scott Nearing (*Huebsch*), a thing of cabbages, underwear and kindling wood all compact; "THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT," by S. J. Duncan-Clark (*Small-Maynard*), a laborious statement and defense of the Roosevelt quackeries; "VOTES FOR MEN," by some anonymous foe of the suffragettes (*Duffield*), and "MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE," by John Haynes Holmes (*Huebsch*). Plowing through a dozen or more of such volumes, I find actual stimulation in but one of them, to wit, in "THE LARGER ASPECTS OF SOCIALISM," by William English Walling (*Macmillan*). Mr. Walling chiefly devotes himself to proving that the social reorganization demanded by the Socialists is not a consummation that must wait upon the slow steps of evolution. It may conceivably come, he argues, with great speed, and he makes no effort to conceal his hope and belief that it will. This theory, of course, involves a destructive criticism of the evolutionists, particularly Spencer, and of the scientific attitude of mind.

It is absurd, says Mr. Walling, to assume that the laws which account for the evolution of man from the primordial protoplasm will be sufficient to account for all of man's future progress. A new force is now at work, to wit, the will of man himself, and while this force cannot halt the operation of the laws of nature, it can at least direct them, as it were, by playing one against another. In brief, consciousness is something which defies the sun and the lightnings, and goes far toward making its own rules. No need to say, after this, that Mr. Walling is an eager partisan of the pragmatism of William James and of the dualism of M. Bergson. Following the invariable Socialist habit, indeed, he seeks to show that Marx and Engels, far before James, were privy to the chief secrets of pragmatism. I think you will find entertainment and instruction in this highly original volume. It will show you a keen mind at work.